AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMACY AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS INDONESIA, 1965 TO 1980

by

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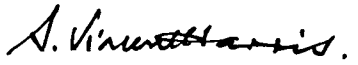
To the memory of my Mother

and to the memories of Peter and Donald Dunn

This thesis represents my own work and to the best of my knowledge contains no material published or written by another person except where specifically indicated.



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CONTENTS

SYNOPSIS

This thesis analyses Australian policies and attitudes towards Indonesia from 1965 to 1980. It commences with a brief outline of relations between Australia and Indonesia before 1965. This is followed, with a view to providing a background to the subsequent phases of the relationship, by a survey of Indonesia's domestic and international policies under the 'New Order'.

The thesis then canvasses Australia's rapprochement with Indonesia following the coup in 1965. In doing so, it examines the significance of Australia's international environment in determining official attitudes towards Indonesia, as well as issues related to the Australia-Indonesia relationship. With Britain's withdrawal from the region and a vast reduction in the role of the United States, it is argued that, because of its proximity and strategic importance to Australia, Indonesia received particular attention in Australian thinking about foreign policy and its relations with the neighbouring countries of South-East and East Asia. This was especially the case insofar as fears for our national security continued to dominate Australia's approach to foreign and defence policy. Hence -- and a major theme of this thesis -- the development of a 'special relationship' was pursued vigorously by the major Australian political parties. It became, however, an increasingly significant and volatile component of Australian foreign policy, because attitudes were developed and policies resolved within an atmosphere of increasing dispute.

This thesis proceeds to consider evolving policies and attitudes to the Australia-Indonesia relationship within the context of specific foreign policy problems confronting Australia in the late 1960s and 1970s. While Australia's West New Guinea policy is examined, of catalytic influence was the mounting domestic criticism of Australia's relations with the Suharto government, and, in particular, the Indonesian Government's domestic policies, which were seen to be marked by debilitating

corruption and an increasing suppression of all opposition, as well as by a widening gap between the rich and poor. Such issues were well documented in Australia, and they steadily alienated many observers. It is argued that these developments in Indonesia strengthened the position of opponents of the 'special relationship', with the debate compelled to widen as continuing sensitivities in the Indonesian political system gave rise by the mid-1970s to the 'Malari Affair', the closure of newspapers, student arrests, charges of corruption in high places and the Pertamina scandal. Nevertheless, more immediate and tangible interest prevailed, and the new Whitlam Labor government remained committed to Australia's very close association with Indonesia.

Finally, this study examines Australian policy towards Indonesia in the face of heightening domestic criticism during the East Timor crisis. Throughout the 1975-80 period, the issue was a constant reminder of the extent of Australia's entrenched commitment to the 'special relationship'. It is argued that attempts by the Australian political parties to resolve disputes generated by this policy, significantly affected Australian attitudes toward the Australia-Indonesia relationship as a whole. Australia's policy consequently came under siege, with the government under criticism, not only from Indonesia, but also from significant sections of Australian society. Many groups and individuals in Australia began to question the central plank of Australia's South-East Asian policy the maintenance of a 'special relationship' with Indonesia, particularly if it meant acceding to the latter's wishes on all issues. Indeed, assessments began to be made on its effectiveness and its cost. In essence, a sense of vulnerability infused a more serious, if not sophisticated, interest in the basis for Australian policy towards Indonesia.

Throughout this thesis it is argued that the cultivation of Indonesia's friendship has grown from a vague notion that Australia has had to keep on good terms with its neighbour. This stemmed from Australia's historical obsessions with security and the

persistently argued official view that Indonesia is the linchpin of Southeast Asian Security. However, the tendency to overstress the security aspect of our association or to think in terms of some need for a 'special relationship' with Indonesia, out of a concern about Indonesia's potential to wield power and influence within the region, was doing little other than directing Australian policy makers towards a cul-de-sac of uncertain bilateralism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would, firstly, like to thank the Department of Political Science at the University of Tasmania for the opportunity to undertake this study. In particular, my thanks go to my principal supervisor, Dr. P Eldridge, whose continued support and understanding I wish to acknowledge, with gratitude. I thank as well the Department of International Relations at the Australian National University for the assistance and facilities provided to me during the course of my research in Canberra.

I owe an incalculable debt to Professor Alan Rix who, as my second supervisor, assisted me with enthusiasm and patience. I am also indebted to Dr. Colin Brown and Professors Viviani and Mackie for their invaluable advice and guidance. Colleagues at the Australian National University and Griffith University were always a source of inspiration.

I wish to acknowledge, with thanks, Anne Clugston and Veronica Cooper. Both displayed tremendous understanding and patience in the typing and retyping of the text.

Finally, I owe Elizabeth, my wife, more than words can say.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Australian Council of Churches
ACFOA	Australian Council for Overseas Aid
AETA	Australia-East Timor Association
AIA	Australian-Indonesian Association
AIBCC	Australian Indonesian Business Cooperation Committee
AIIA	Australian Institute of International Affairs
AJA	Australian Journalists' Association
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANU	Australian National University
ANZUK	Australian, New Zealand and British Forces
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand and United States (Treaty)
APODETI	Timorese Popular Democratic Association
APOP	Australian Public Opinion Polls
APSA	Australian Political Science Association
APTU	Amalgamated Postal and Telecommunications Union
ARBRI	Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia
ASA	Association of South-East Asian States
ASDT	Association of Timorese Social Democrats
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
ASIAT	Australian Society for Inter-Country Aid - Timor
ASPAC	Asian and Pacific Council
ASRB	Australian Sales Research Bureau
AUS	Australian Union of Students
AVA	Australian Volunteers Abroad
AWD	Action for World Development
AWDP	Action for World Development Program
BAKIN	State Intelligence Coordinating Agency
BE	Export Bonus
BIES	Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies
CAA	Community Aid Abroad
CIET	Campaign for an Independent East Timor
CPA	Communist Party of Australia

CPD	Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates
CRS	Catholic Relief Services of the United States
CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies
DCP	Defence Cooperation Program
DLP	Democratic Labor Party
DPR	People's Representative Council
DRET	Democratic Republic of East Timor
EEC	European Economic Community
FOET	Friends of East Timor
FRETILIN	The Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor
GESTAPU	Coup d'etat ('30 September Movement')
GNP	Gross National Product
GOLKAR	Joint Functional Group
HANKAM	Defence and Security Department
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGGI	Inter-Governmental Group of Indonesia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRC	Idonesian Red Cross
KOGM	Operational Command to Crush Malaysia
KOPKAMTIB	Operation Command for the Restoration of Security and Order
KOTA	Monarchist Party
LCP	Liberal-Country Party
MAC	Movimento Anti-Communista
MPR	People's Consultative Assembly
MPRS	People's Provisional Consultative Assembly
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCP	National Country Party
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPD	National Planning Body
NU	Muslim Scholars' League
OPM	Free Papua Movement
PBEC	Pacific Basin Economic Council
PIBA	Pacific-Indonesian Business Association

PICA	Private Investment Company for Asia
PKI	Indonesian Communist Party
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNI	Indonesian Nationalist Party
REPELITA	Five-Year Development Plan
RSL	Returned Services League
SALC	South African Liberation Centre
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SEARC	South-East Asian Regional Cooperation
SEATO	South-East Asian Treaty Organisation
SMH	Sydney Morning Herald
TAA	Trans Australia Airline
UDT	Timorese Democratic Union
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNTEA	United Nations Temporary Executive Authority
USA	United States of America
USSR	United Soviet Socialist Republic
WCC	World Council of Churches
WI	West Irian
WNG	West New Guinea
WWF	Waterside Workers Federation
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

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NOTE ON SOURCES

When work was initiated on this study, it seemed appropriate to explore, as far as public records would allow, Australian policies and attitudes towards Indonesia during the period 1965-1980. To serve this purpose, a classical 'traditional' method of political and historical analysis of post-coup developments was envisaged. This involved an examination of documents, personal and official papers and memoirs, and was supplemented by interviews, where possible. However, in terms of material for a doctoral thesis, the post-coup period is only a partially documented topic. Archival practice in Australia does not allow access by researchers to official files or privileged information. As any meaningful attempt to examine Australian foreign policy, generally, depends on this information, it became clear that there was a need to narrow the focus onto the circumstances under which Australia-Indonesia relations developed during the period under review. Also because it is a topic about which there are highly diverse and controversial interpretations, it was decided to focus a substantial part of the thesis on those interpretations.

Where possible I have drawn upon government publications, parliamentary debates, biographies, memoirs and academic writings. This thesis has depended also on a careful reading of the press (utilizing the extensive resources of the International Relations and Political Science Departments of the Australian National University). Interviews also proved to be useful. In fact, these two research tools were utilized to reinforce each other. Over the years I have interviewed with officials within relevant Departments in Canberra, MPs (including former foreign ministers and Prime Ministers) parliamentary staff, journalists, representatives of interest groups, businessmen and members of foreign embassies, as well as Australian missions overseas.

Clearly, many people with an interest in Australian foreign policy generally, and Australia's relations with Indonesia, in particular, have been sought. Many of those who were interviewed were public servants, and the majority preferred that the interview material not be attributed to them. Wherever possible, however, published evidence was sought to corroborate the information they gave me. Hence, with regard to public sources and private information, I have attempted to interlock the information into a 'corroborative framework'. Integral here were secondary sources which were broad in both origin and content. Hence, secondary sources are evident throughout the thesis. However, as historical research was not a major aim they have been interspersed with primary ones.

INTRODUCTION

The Australia-Indonesia Relationship

This thesis is a study of Australia's relationship with the 'New Order' Government in Indonesia and covers the period from 1965 to 1980. While it has been observed that Indonesia in recent years has been '...the crucible of Australian foreign policy...',[1] throughout the period under review, the relationship has been a major source of dispute in Australia, with tensions and incidents transcending the diplomatic and political spadework so assiduously conducted by successive Liberal and Labor Governments.

Moreover, the 1965 to 1980 period ended as it began, with caution as the hallmark of Australia's Indonesia policy. This caution followed in the wake of some of the most dramatic examples of Australia's total inability to influence important neighbourhood developments, including the West New Guinea takeover in 1962, Indonesia's 'confrontation' of the projected state of Malaysia in 1963, and the incorporation of Portuguese Timor into Indonesia in 1975. All had a common theme: marked concern at the public level paralleled visible differences of opinion among policy makers.[2] It is an examination of this theme with which this thesis is primarily concerned.

On one level the study evaluates the conduct of government-to-government relations and, drawing some implications from the policy experiences of a decade and a half of cooperation and conflict, explains why the anxieties that afflicted Australia in the early to mid-1960s came once again to the fore when the Timor issue manifested itself, evoking at the policy level old fears and antagonisms; why the distinctive features of Australian foreign policy towards Indonesia in the mid to late 1970s bore a remarkable

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1 Renouf, A., A Frightened Country, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1979, p.399.

2 Brown, C.P., "Australia-Indonesian Relations", Australia and Asia: The Capricornia Papers, Centre for the Study of Australian-Asian Relations, Paper No.10, July 1980, p.71.

resemblance to government policy of the earlier period,[1] reflecting caution, restraint, and the determination to avoid decisions that might set Australia upon a collision course with its nearest Asian neighbour. On another level, the study focuses on the political process within which Australia's Indonesia policy has been formulated.

The real challenge in writing about the Australia-Indonesia relationship lay in exploring one major anomaly, as stated by C.P. Brown:

> while Australian political and diplomatic leaders have stressed so frequently and as strongly the necessity of serving and maintaining good relations with Indonesia, in fact Australia-Indonesia relations, at least at the public level, have been dominated by disagreement, and by failures on both sides to understand the attitudes, feelings and policies of the other.[2]

To understand this claim it is important to grasp the essentially complex nature of the relationship itself. Two middle powers differentiated by divergent centuries-long experiences and separated by contrasting socio-cultural perspectives, yet thrust into political proximity as a consequence of factors such as geography, ideology, changes in their respective foreign policies and the changing balance of power in the Southeast Asian region, could hardly avoid being plunged into a competitive relationship.

One of the consequences of this condition, and wherein lies the key to any understanding of the paradox identified by Brown, is the juxtaposition between the pressures arising from the changing nature of Australia's immediate strategic environment and those arising from divergent views within Australia of the implications -- in historical circumstances such as those in which Australia found itself in the late 1960s -- of Australia's relationship with Indonesia. These aspects emerge as themes linking the three parts of the study. Since the Menzies era in Australian political history ended, debate over Australian foreign policy has been dominated by the changing face of international politics in the East and Southeast Asian regions. Intrinsic to this debate in the 1960s, and also a major source of dispute, was the dismantling of

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1 Refer to Viviani, N.M., "Australian Attitudes and Policies Towards Indonesia, 1950-1965", Ph.D. thesis, Department of International Relations, ANU, 1973, esp. Chs. 6 through 8.

2 Brown, C.P., "Australia-Indonesia Relations", 1980, p.71.

British and American Southeast Asian strategies. By the 1970s, changing power configurations saw the emergence of a new polarization of forces in the strategic balance.[1] During the course of both decades, Australia was compelled to define distinctive security interests of its own aside from the interests of its more powerful allies, and those of its neighbours. For different reasons, these developments brought realism to a foreign policy debate dominated, since 1945, by cold war abstractions and theorising on the relative merits of power politics, international organizations and regional relations.

Differing perceptions on the part of policy makers and the community of Australia's relations with, and role in, the region, were central to this debate. Of particular concern, as a corollary of the changing nature of power relations, were the costs and benefits to Australia of its relationship with Indonesia. Within Australia, relations with Indonesia have been at times a major source of conflict: for the Australian policy maker it portrayed an endeavour to frame a foreign policy based on an acceptance of Indonesia as a reconcilable feature of Australia's external environment; while for the Australian community a deep divergence in attitudes -- one based particularly on differing ideologies in foreign policy -- centred on a concern for the modus operandi in the fostering of the Australia-Indonesia relationship.

Inevitably, this relationship has variously been described as ambivalent, competitive, ambiguous, asymmetrical and successful. Thus, while one of the aims of this inquiry is to consider how attitudes are assimilated into the foreign policy-making process, an attempt will be made also to find an answer to the more general question of how foreign policy analysts and observers set about analysing the bases of Australian foreign policy in respect of Indonesia. In establishing a pattern as to how analysts experienced, defined and accommodated this particular element of

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[1] See Bull,H., (ed.), Asia and the Western Pacific: Towards a New International Order, Nelson, Melbourne, 1975, passim; Beddie, B.D., (ed.), Advance Australia - Where?, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1975, passim; Camilleri, J.A., and Teichmann, M., Security and Survival: The New Era in International Relations, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1973; Albinski, H.S., Australian External Policy Under Labor, Queensland University Press, St. Lucia, 1977, esp. chs. 1, 2 and 3.

Australia's external environment, some broader points of issue will be precipitated. For example, what were the key elements of the relationship, as perceived by analysts, as it developed over the several distinct phases in the late 1960s and 1970s? Moreover, what criteria are used in determining guidelines for policy making? What account is taken of community attitudes? Whose interpretations accounted for the true nature of the relationship, and who can sustain credibility or tenability in the face of divergent analysis? Finally, how do we make these judgments in view of a policy-making environment entirely unprecedented in the history of Australian foreign policy?

Looking back over the 1965-80 period, four distinct periods emerge. The first covers the early years from late 1965 to mid-1968, when the Australian Government avoided making any major commitments to the political leadership in Indonesia. This period was characterised by Government resistance to persuasion from within and outside Australia to provide substantial economic assistance to Indonesia. In the second period, from mid-1968 to early 1974, Indonesia emerged as a significant feature of Australian re-assessments of regional security issues in the wake of the British and American announcements of phased military withdrawals from mainland Southeast Asia. It was only when doubts were cast upon the security of Australia's alignments with these powers that Australian Governments were prepared to deepen their relations with Indonesia. The significant place which Indonesia had in Australia's foreign policy was reflected in Australia's response to the West New Guinea (WNG) issue and in the emergence, by the turn of the decade, of a virtually bipartisan policy on Indonesia. The Government's continuing interest and concern in Asia, however, was taken up through much of this period with military and strategic considerations and, as a result, early opportunities to consolidate in the economic and trade areas with Indonesia were lost to Australia.

In the third period, from 1974 to early 1978, the collapse of Portuguese rule in Timor embroiled the relationship in controversy, giving rise at the height of the crisis to a direct conflict between the rhetoric and the reality of Australia's foreign policy principles towards Indonesia. Initial Fraser Government condemnation of the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia -- due in part to Australian domestic opinion -- gave way under the

weight of longer term diplomatic, military and strategic considerations and, in the period following, the issue was the subject of declining official and public interest, promoting the climate for a thaw in Australia-Indonesia relations.

Public approval of the 'New Order' Government had undergone a fragile growth throughout the periods under review. At first, Australian Government attitudes and policies attracted only sporadic comment from the wider community, other than that which emerged in the context of changes arising from the British and American decisions to withdraw from the region. Australia's WNG policy and its attitude toward Indonesia's 'Act of Free Choice' in the late 1960s, as well as towards human rights issues, focused domestic opinion on the nature of the Suharto Government and, by the early 1970s, its internal policies. Important themes are the co-existence of an uneasiness about Indonesia's potential as a threat, with a concern for its welfare and stability; and a number of contentious issues arising from the increasingly authoritarian nature of the 'New Order' Government.

By the mid-1970s, when the major focus of public policy had centred on developments in East Timor, dissenting domestic opinion had concentrated on moral and humanitarian issues such as political prisoners, and these issues converged as East Timor became the subject of intense and highly politicized controversy.

Mode of Examination

For the purposes of analysis, it will be helpful to use a 'level-of-analysis' framework[1] -- a methodology highly relevant to

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[1] In 1961, Professor J.D. Singer introduced the notion of 'levels of analysis'. He argued that the level of analysis at which the scholar views the world is important conceptually and methodologically in the study of world politics and proposed two broad levels: the international system and the nation-state levels of analysis. Within this framework, he emphasized a major distinction used when looking for influences on foreign policy:
(i) those that are internal or domestic, arising from within the nation-state, and
(ii) those that are external, originating in the world outside the state's boundaries. (Singer, J.D., "The Levels-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations", in Knorr, Klaus and Verba, Sydney (eds.), The International System, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1961, pp.77-92).

the analysis of a complex bilateral relationship such as this one.[1] Using this structure, foreign policy can be explained on three levels: the systemic, nation-state and the decision-making process. The systemic level-of-analysis, according to Holsti (1983), explains the behaviour of individual States:

> in terms of the state of the whole system (balanced or imbalanced[2]) and the presence or absence of one aggressive state and a balancer. This type of analysis makes no reference to personalities, domestic pressures, or ideologies within states. Foreign-policy behaviour is conceived as a reaction to the external environment, the state of balance among all the units in the system.[3]

This argument, as originally formulated by Singer,[4] was supported by East and Gregg (1967) who conducted a study of over eighty countries and concluded that their 'actions in the international system are systematically rather than randomly associated with

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1 Singer did not discuss a regional level of analysis. At the time, the international system was dominated by the global rivalries and issues of the Cold War, overshadowing rapidly emerging regionalist trends. The importance of regional sub-systems was analysed by Oran Young in his "Political Discontinuities in the International System," World Politics, April 1968. See also arguments put forward by Haas, E.B., "The United Nations and Regionalism", International Relations, November 1970; and Cantori, L., and Spiegel, S., "International Regions: A Comparative Approach to Five Subordinate Systems", International Studies Quarterly, December 1969. The problem of identifying specific regional sub-systems is examined by Thompson, W.R., "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory", International Studies Quarterly, December 1969.

2 A reference to Holsti's earlier discussion on the classical theory of balance of power.

3 Holsti, K.J., International Politics: A Framework for Analysis, 4th Edition, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1983, p.15.

4 In Singer's words, 'the systemic level of analysis ... permits us to examine international relations in the whole with a comprehensiveness that is, of necessity, lost when our focus is shifted to a lower, and more partial level'. (Singer, J.D., "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations", reprinted in Rosenau, J.N., (ed.), International Politics and Foreign Policy: a reader in research and theory, The Free Press, New York, 1969, p.22.)

their ... international situation'.[1] Further, they found evidence to suggest that these actions, whether resulting in cooperation or conflict, were associated more with variations in the international, rather than domestic, situation.[2]

Those who employ this approach in the study of international relations usually 'postulate a high degree of uniformity in the foreign policy operational codes of our national actors. By definition, we allow little room for divergence in the behaviour of our parts when we focus on the whole'.[3] The nature and behaviour of States are, thus, characterised by a homogeneity; they share the pursuit of power, and as Holsti argues, to understand their external behaviour, is not to know anything about the internal structure, the domestic environment nor of the personalities of the leaders of particular States. Thus, in:

> eschewing any empirical concern with the domestic and internal variations within the separate nations, the system-oriented approach tends to produce a sort of 'black box' or 'billiard ball' concept of the national actors.[4]

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1 East, M.A., and Gregg, P.M., "Factors Influencing Co-operation and conflict in the International System", International Studies Quarterly, 11 (1967), p.265.

2 Jensen and Cohen found conflicting evidence when analysing this proposition in the context of a specific policy. In a post-Second World War analysis of the defeated States (Germany, Italy and Japan), Jensen found the domestic environment became an increasingly more important variable in influencing the foreign and defence policy processes in these three countries (Jensen, L., "Post-war Democratic Politics: national-international linkages in the defense policy of the defeated states", in Rosenau, J.N., (ed.), Linkage Politics: Essays on the Convergence of National and International Systems, The Free Press, New York, 1969, p.322.) Cohen, however, conducted a comparative case study of Soviet and US leaders, and concluded that the external environment had been a socializing influence on them, particularly in relation to nuclear restraint and the limitations of power (Cohen, B.C., in Rosenau, J.N., (ed.), Linkage Politics, pp.139-141). Similar conclusions were also reached by Holsti and Sullivan in relation to France and China. See Holsti, O.R., and Sullivan, J.D., "National-international linkages France and China as nonconforming alliance members", in Rosenau, J.N., (ed.), Linkage Politics, pp.147-195.

3 Singer (in Rosenau, J.N., 1969), "The Levels-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations", p.23.

4 Ibid.

According to Singer, in order to understand their behaviour, it is necessary only to appreciate the characteristics which they all share and the situation in which they find themselves.

In contrast, the nation-state and decision-making levels of analysis emphasize the role of these domestic and internal variations.[1] Those who favour these approaches[2] consider 'the systemic model ... usually eventuates in rather gross comparisons based on relatively crude dimensions and characteristics',[3] and argue that states are highly individualistic entities, responsive to domestic pressures and the personalities and politics of those who lead them. Moreover, it is considered that the advantage in using the nation-state level of analysis is that it 'permits significant differentiation among our actors in the international system'.[4] Further, it overcomes the assumption implicit in the systemic level of analysis that the foreign policy behaviour of the nation-state is in direct response to the forces at work in the international environment.[5] Thus, the nation-state level-of-analysis has much to commend it. As Holsti explains:

> Wars, alliances, imperialism, diplomatic manoeuvers, isolation, and the many goals of diplomatic action can be viewed as the results of domestic political pressure, national ideologies, public opinion, or economic and social needs... governments do not react just to the external environment or to some mythical balance or imbalance. Their actions also express the needs and

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1 While Singer's distinction was valuable, James Rosenau was to later broaden this 'schema', identifying six levels: (1) the individual decision makers, and their characteristics; (2) the roles these decision makers occupied; (3) the structure of the government; (4) The society within which they function; (5) the relationship between the nation-states (within which they operate) and other international actors; and (6) the global system. (See Rosenau, J.N., The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy, The Free Press, New York, 1971, Chapter 5.)

2 See East and Gregg (1967), and Jensen(1969).

3 Singer (in Rosenau, J.N. International Politics and Foreign Policy), "The Level-of-Analysis Problem", p.24.

4 Ibid.

5 It is acknowledged, however, that as the nation-state level of analysis focuses on the internal factors and conditions involved in the formulation of foreign policy decision making, its utility is limited to the bases of foreign policy action and not international interaction.

values of their own population and political leaders.[1]

Finally, bureaucratic organizations[2] and the actions and behaviour of those in the decision-making process, whether a Prime Minister or a bureaucrat, are deemed important. Past theoretical work has focused to a great extent on decision-making variables[3], as well as on the impact on such variables as crisis situations[4], the nature

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1 Holsti K.J., International Politics: A Framework for Analysis, p.15.

2 See Vital, D., "Back to Machiavelli, in Knorr, K. and Rosenau, J.N., (eds.), Contending Approaches to International Politics, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J. and Guildford, 1969, esp. p.153; Alison, G.T., Essence of Decision, Little, Brown, Boston, 1971; Halperin, M.H., Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy, Brookings Institute, Washington, 1974. An application of the concepts to events in 1914 was done by Williamson in Lauren, P.G., (ed.), Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory and Policy, Collier-Macmillan and New York Free Press, London, 1979. For criticisms of this theory see Krasner, S.D., "Are Bureaucracies Important? (or Allison Wonderland)", Foreign Policy, No.7 (summer) 1972, pp.159-179; Also Freedman, L. "Logics, Politics and Foreign Policy Processes: A Critique of the Bureaucratic Politics Model", International Affairs, Vol.52, No.3, 1976, pp.434-449, and Wallace, W. and Paterson, W.E., (eds.), Foreign Policy Making in Western Europe, Praeger, New York, 1978.

3 See for example, Snyder, Richard C., et al. (eds.), Foreign Policy Decision-Making, The Free Press, New York, 1962; and Frankel, J., The Making of Foreign Policy: An Analysis of Decision-Making, Oxford University Press, New York, 1963. See also Rosenau, J.N., The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy, London, Frances Pinder and New York, Nichols, 1980; and Bloomfield, L.P., The Foreign Policy Process: A Modern Primer, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. and London, 1982; Clarke, M. and White, B., An Introduction to Foreign Policy Analysis: The Foreign Policy System, Ormskirk and Northridge, G.W. and Heskoth, A., 1981; Jensen, L., Explaining Foreign Policy, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, and Hemel Hempstead, 1982.

4 See for example, Siverson, R.M., "International Conflict and the perception of Injury: the case of the Suez crisis", International Studies Quarterly, 1970 (14), pp.157-165; and Zaninovitch, M.G., "Pattern Analysis of Variables within the International System: The Sino-Soviet example", Journal of Conflict Resolution, 1962 (6), pp.253-268. See also Brechner, M., Decisions in Crisis: Israel '67 and '73, University of California Press, London & Berkley, CA, 1980; Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy, Oxford University Press, London, 1974; and Brechner, M., (ed.), Studies in Crisis Behaviour, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, New

of the issues[1], and the decision-maker's images of foreign policy[2]. Essentially, however, what concerns us here is how decision makers go about:

> defining purposes, choosing among courses of action, and utilizing national capabilities to achieve the objectives in the name of the state. This level of analysis focuses upon the ideologies, motivations, ideals, perceptions, values or idiosyncracies of those who are empowered to make decisions for the state.[3]

The thesis will therefore draw together evidence of the attitudes and approaches of major decision makers in the context of Australian opinion on the Indonesian relationship. However, the study is not a detailed decision-making analysis.

While each major unit of analysis provides a different focus of the factors influencing the external behaviour of a State, the relative importance and utility of each approach must be addressed.[4] Conversely, the level of analysis which provides the

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Jersey, 1979.

1 See Touval, S., "Africa's frontiers: Reaction to Colonial Legacy", International Affairs (London), 1966 (42); and Holsti, O.R., "Individual Differences in 'definition of the situation'", Journal of Conflict Resolution, 1970 (14).

2 See for example, Jervis, R., "Hypotheses on Misperception", World Politics, 1968 (20), pp.454-479. See also by the same author: Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Politics, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J. & Guildford, 1976. While 'images' were emphasized by K.E. Boulding in 1961 (The Image: Knowledge in Life and Society, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, MI, 1961), H & M Sprout more recently link a concern for perceptions with a more general analysis of causation, in particular the inter-relationship between endogenous perceptions and exogenous constraints such as those deriving from geopolitics (The Ecological Perspective in Human Affairs, Greenwood Press, London and Westport, CT, 1979).

3 Holsti, K.J., International Politics: A Framework for Analysis, p.16.

4 While we will hold firmly to these levels of analysis, it must be acknowledged that considerable attention has been focused on other 'actors' in the global international system. 'Transnationals', especially multinational corporations have received attention as major players on the international stage. They are considered important because of their membership and resources, and their consequent ability to intervene in the internal affairs of host countries, as well as to affect interstate relations. (See

most useful perspective from which to explain or understand politics between States (in this instance, relations between Australia and Indonesia) must be addressed. Singer considered:

> For a staggering variety of reasons the scholar may be more interested in one level than the other at any given time and will undoubtedly shift his orientation according to his research needs. So the problem is really not one of deciding which level is most valuable to the discipline as a whole and then demanding it be adhered to ... Rather, it is one of realizing that there is this preliminary conceptual issue and that it must be temporarily resolved prior to any research undertaking.[1]

Yet, just as each level makes a contribution, each also fails to account for certain aspects of the overall picture that must be considered. While it is at odds with Singer's view that the scholar should preselect the particular level of analysis he or she

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Huntington, Samuel P., "Transnational Organizations in World Politics", World Politics, April 1973; Ball, George W., (ed.), Global Companies: The Political Economy of World Business, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1975; and David Apter, D.E., and Goodman, Louis Wolf, (eds.), The Multinational Corporation and Social Change, Praeger, New York, 1976).

Other units of study (outside the organized political communal structure) with a role within nations include churches, ethnic minorities, the press, and economic interest groups (farmers, industries). For an anlysis of the reaction against the traditional 'states-as-sole-actors approach' - an approach in which all significant events and changes in the international scene are attributed to the policies of national governments - see Wolfers, Arnold, "The Actors in International Politics" in Fox, William T.R., (ed.) Theoretical Aspects of International Relations, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1959.

Finally, another area of analysis that focuses on relationships in the global international system, and is closely related to systems theory, has been interdependence. Interdependence, according to Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye has two dimensions -- sensitivity and vulnerability. The former 'involves degrees of responsiveness within a policy framework - how quickly do changes in one country bring costly changes in another, and how great are the costly effects'. Vulnerability according to Keohane and Nye 'can be defined as an actor's liability to suffer costs imposed by external events even after policies have been altered'. Interdependence, with these two dimensions, can be social, political, economic or ideological in nature. See Keohane, R.O., and Nye, Joseph S., Power and Interdependences: World Politics in Transition, Little Brown, Boston, 1977. Esp. pp.9-13.

[1] Singer (in Rosenau, J.N., International Politics and Foreign Policy), "The Level-of-Analysis Problem", p.28.

wishes to use, an analysis of Australia's foreign policy will not be a complete, and therefore informed one, if it embraces only the attitudes and values of Australia's Prime Minister or Foreign Minister. Nor is it sufficient to analyze Australia's economic and social needs. The net must be cast more widely, to embrace considerations related to other aspects of the State's internal environment, as well as the main characteristics of the external environment.[1]

Consequently, each level of analysis, while not mutually exclusive, is appropriate to this study, and depending on the type of problems to be analysed, will be employed at different times. At the same time, however, Singer's words of caution are worth bearing in mind:

> if the case for one or another of the possible levels of analysis cannot be made with any certainty, one must nevertheless maintain a continuing awareness of their use. We may utilize one level here and another there, but we cannot afford to shift our orientation in the midst of a study ... when we do in fact make an original selection or replace one with another at appropriate times, we must do so with a full awareness of the descriptive, explanatory, and predictive implication of such choice.[2]

The point to emphasize is that while such an argument is understandable in view of the intellectual burdens imposed by a multi-level perspective, it is increasingly losing its validity because international politics now reflects a complex interaction of global and State components. In essence, it is hoped that by using such a perspective this thesis will provide some understanding of one of 'the fundamental conditions and processes

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1 Holsti, K.J., International Politics: A Framework for Analysis, Chapter 12. Holsti evaluates the influences on foreign policy of ideology, beliefs, values, attitudes and images in relation to the internal environment. Further he examines the roles of bureaucratic needs, values and traditions, social needs, national attributes and public opinion. In considering the external environment he analyses the effects other countries' objectives and actions have on a country's external behaviour, as well as international economic and other trends (population growth, food supply) that have an influence. He then concludes with an analysis of the relationships between all these aspects, assessing the relative importance of these different components.

2 Singer (in Rosenau, J.N., International Politics and Foreign Policy), "The Level-of-Analysis Problem", p.28.

of international politics - how people and governments behave in their external relations'.[1]

A Preliminary Framework

Implicit in the questions posed earlier are a number of themes, each requiring different levels of analysis. By adopting two broad levels -- the international system and the nation-state (and the process of opinion-making therein) -- this study will amplify a major distinction used when looking for influences on foreign policy: those that are internal or domestic, coming from within the nation-state, and those that are external, originating in the environment beyond the State's boundaries. However, extending this, the assumption in this thesis is that foreign policy has a distinct and strong basis in the domestic political system, as well as being subjected to external constraints.

Therefore, this study has two main themes. The first argues that Australian foreign policy making has become as affected by the domestic political environment as by international constraints, and that an understanding of these factors is necessary to any full understanding of the substance and direction of Australia's Indonesian policy in the period under review. The second surveys the extent and intensity of the relationship between non-government and community attitudes, and the policy maker. While primary attention in this study will be given to an exposition of the historical record (within the framework outlined below), the analysis is also designed to relate the experiences arising from the Australian-Indonesian relationship to these broader themes.

Intrinsic to these perspectives will be the need to reconstruct the formulation and conduct of Australian policy towards Indonesia during the 1965-80 period (as far as public record will allow). This will be illustrated by focusing on the questions at issue, drawing conclusions about the characteristic style of Australian policy in general, and the changing context within which the policy was made. Furthermore, as the issues raised in this thesis were the subject of highly politicized and emotional controversy, it seemed important to examine the institutional context within which attitudes and opinions were

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[1] Holsti, K.J., International Politics: A Framework for Analysis, P.21.

formed and expressed (for example, the Australian Parliament). In view of this, and given the development of opinion throughout the period under review, it seemed desirable not to separate the issues but to consider them as part of an historical process.

Inevitably, part of the account of developments is repeated and the amount of space given to an opinion of a particular group or individual may not necessarily reflect the importance of its influence within the community or on policy making.[1] However, by taking such an approach, we are able to fully examine such opinions, and to make an assessment as to whether they are influenced by group membership or other factors. It also enables assessments to be made about the interaction of domestic opinion on these issues (apart from the aspect of policy making). Against this background, the study will seek to weigh the influence of the attitude of the policy maker, the impact of domestic opinion and the exigencies of the actions of other States in evaluating the making of policy decisions and their effectiveness in the domestic and international environments.

Structure and Organization

Accordingly, this thesis is divided into three parts. The first, utilizing the systemic level of analysis, stresses the influence of the international system on Australia's foreign policy behaviour in the 1960s. However, it begins by describing the historical origins and persistence of the importance of Indonesia to Australia, moving to account for the underlying motivations for the changes in Australia's political and diplomatic relations with the new Suharto government. It then turns to a sketch of the consolidation of the Indonesian government (Chapter One), focusing predominantly on the domestic context. The intention here is quite limited in that it does not seek nor purport to give a rounded history of Indonesia under the 'New Order'. Rather, we will focus on particular aspects of Indonesia's evolving socio-economic and political life under the 'New Order' Government, and what this means for Indonesia's attitudes to the world. But in doing so, it serves two further purposes. First, it provides an overview of the

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[1] This is reduced by drawing opinions and attitudes together at the end of each relevant chapter, and relating them to each other.

major sources of growing discontent within Australia toward the Suharto government. Second, it offers an insight into Indonesia's policy objectives and actions, bearing in mind that in terms of the utility of the systemic level of analysis, such objectives and actions are instrumental in 'set[ting] an agenda of foreign policy problems between two or more governments'.[1]

The remainder of Part One (Chapters Two and Three) examines, principally from secondary sources, the course and conduct of Australian foreign policy as it related to the region during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The changing nature of power relations in the region during this period served to nurture increasing doubts on the part of Australian policy makers as to the tenability of Australia's traditional security alliances, and Indonesia's strategic importance in Australia's regional perspective was substantially enhanced. To a large degree it explains these processes not only in systemic terms but also in terms of the place of the nation and its interests within the international and regional system, and in particular the key decision makers -- their perceptions, motivations, and ideologies -- and the structures to which they belong. This section includes a brief examination of the effect of such factors, particularly in the formulation and conduct of Australia's West New Guinea policy.

In Part Two of the thesis the nation-State level of analysis is taken further and the political process within which Australia's Indonesia policy has been formulated, is explored. Chapter Four examines the views of the Australian press while, in Chapter Five, attention is focused on the role of the Parliament and the major political parties. Finally, Chapter Six examines the views and impact of other elements of domestic opinion.

In Part Three both the systemic and nation-State levels of analysis are utilized. It opens with a brief treatment of what amounted, by the early 1970s, to a new era in world politics. A brief assessment is made of the changes, as well as of Australia's responses to them, under both conservative and labor governments. In Chapter Seven, they are then related to an examination of Australian government policy toward Indonesia during the East Timor crisis. On the systemic level, events in East Timor and

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[1] Holsti, K.J., International Politics: A Framework for Analysis, p.348.

Indonesia's policy responses provide an important context to an examination of the character and direction of Australian policy utilizing the nation-State level of analysis. Accordingly, the thesis returns to an analysis of the political processes during this later period. Chapters Eight and Nine examine the roles of the Press and Parliament, while Chapter Ten deals with the part played by other elements of domestic opinion during the conduct of Australia's East Timor policy.

PART ONE

INDONESIAN REHABILITATION AND AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY INTERESTS

In August 1965 -- the twentieth anniversary of the proclamation of Indonesian independence -- J.A.C. Mackie said of international relations in Southeast Asia:

> Most Asian countries have long been familiar with a world in which the political and moral issues to be faced have not been simple, but blurred and complex. We Australians have long been shielded from this kind of world, but now we are having to learn how to live in it. We cannot turn our backs on our neighbours or pretend to be indifferent to them and their problems. Only by actively fostering better understanding and mutual respect can we hope to build up the spirit of good-neighbourly friendship which inspired the happier early phase of Australian-Indonesian relations.[1]

Up to that time, the short history of Australian-Indonesian relations presented a blurred and complex picture. It was one of conflict and cooperation, of distrust and goodwill, and of self-centred apathy and lively interests. For both Australia and Indonesia it had been a learning experience -- to live with a neighbour who was too significant to be simply ignored, and too different to be readily understood. The emergence of Indonesia as a sovereign state in 1949, after a bloody and bitter post-war struggle with their long-term colonial masters, suddenly introduced a situation for both Australia and Indonesia for which there was no close historical precedent.[2]

On the one hand, mainly concentrated on the eastern side of a huge dry continent, there were over ten million people of predominantly European origin. On the other, there were some eighty million Asians of diverse origins spread over more than 3 000 tropical islands. In the mid-1940s, all Australia and Indonesia had in common was propinquity -- they were yet to have a common border. Ideally, the following twenty years should have been spent in a continuous procedure of contact, exploration,

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1 The Age, 17 August 1965.

2 See George, M., Australia and the Indonesian Revolution, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1980.

learning and building. Instead, in the mid-1960s, Australia found that the task of constructing a viable Australian-Indonesian relationship had scarcely begun.

By then, two political events had dominated the affairs of the region after Indonesia's independence. The first was Indonesia's campaign to secure West Irian, which lasted more than ten years and was conducted at various levels of intensity. Over this period, Australia stood by uncomfortably, uncertain of itself and its turbulent neighbour in a strange new situation.[1] It was a period in which much of the goodwill that Australia had gained in the late 1940s by championing Indonesian's right to freedom, was slowly eroded. Similarly, in Australia the consensus was growing that in backing Indonesia, it had misdirected its support.[2]

However, the West Irian issue did not cause irreparable harm to Australia's relationship with Indonesia. With the settlement of that issue, Australia and Indonesia now had the opportunity to join in the process of learning to live together. But this was not to be. In a very short time, the former was faced with a far more testing sample of the latter's assertiveness in the form of its 'confrontation' against Malaysia -- a fellow member of the Commonwealth -- between 1963 and 1965. In military terms, Indonesian hostilities were far short of total war, but clearly required and produced a military response from Australia in support of British and Malaysian efforts to restrain Indonesia.[3]

However, while Australia's policy towards Indonesia over the difficult 'confrontation' period consisted essentially of a

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1 This is well portrayed by T.B. Millar in his study "Australian Defence, 1945-65", in Greenwood, G. and Harper, N., (eds.), Australia in World Affairs, 1961-65, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1968, pp.278-282.

2 Millar, T.B., Australia in Peace and War: External Relations 1788-1977, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1978, p.229; and Bull, H., "Asia in the Seventies: An Australian View", in McCarthy, G., (ed.), Foreign Policy for Australia: Choices for the Seventies, AIPS, 1973, pp.46-47.

3 Angel, J., "Australia and Indonesia", in Greenwood, G. and Harper, N., (eds.), Australia in World Affairs, 1966-1970, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1974, p.380. For a full analysis of this period see Mackie, J.A.C., Konfrontasi, The Indonesia -Malaysia Dispute 1963-1966, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1974.

measured but unequivocal military response to Indonesian aggression, it was tempered by quiet efforts to ensure that existing links between Australia and Indonesia were not destroyed. Colombo Plan cooperation was maintained, continuing the intake of Indonesian students into Australia, as well as the Australian road building and telecommunication projects in Indonesia; an agreement was signed to mark the border between West Irian and Papua New Guinea; Qantas continued to operate services through Jakarta; and full diplomatic contacts were maintained. Further, to complete a curious picture (and while it reflected a desire on Australia's part to remain on good terms with the right-wing military leadership in Jakarta), officers from the Australian and Indonesian armies continued attending each others' staff colleges up until early 1965.

The astonishing thing was that, despite the fact that armed hostilities had taken place so early in this coexistence, there had not been a diplomatic rupture.[1] This restraint reflected both an intelligent awareness of the facts of geographical life, and an acknowledgement in strategic terms of the absence, at least in the short term, of an unbalanced power relationship.[2] This policy continued until an attempted coup in Jakarta, on 30 September 1965, paved the way for its abandonment in mid-1966. Australia welcomed the change in government in Indonesia because it was evidence of a change in the ideology of that country. This ideological change was seen as the beginning of a diminution of the threat to Australia's security that Sukarno's aggressive nationalism and alignment with communism had appeared to pose.

From here, the developments which created and sustained the conditions for an improvement in the Australian-Indonesian relationship can be traced. Although, publicly, Australia adopted

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1 Beddie, B.D., "Australian Policy Towards Indonesia", Australian Outlook, Vol.22, No.2, August 1968, p.136. Australia's Ambassador to Indonesia at the time, K.C.O. Shann recalled the lengths to which Australian diplomacy went when he recounted the story of when both he and President Sukarno engaged in social discussion 'over cups of tea', as Australian and Indonesian troops fought in the jungles of Borneo (Harris, personal interview with K.C.O. Shann, Canberra, November 1980).

2 Beddie,B.D., "Australian Policy Towards Indonesia", pp.136-139.

a very low key response to the changed circumstances, the Indonesian questions facing Australian foreign policy makers, and the concern of Chapter Two, were of high priority: should Australia disregard Indonesia as a possible military threat and concentrate its efforts solely on positive measures of assistance and cooperation? Should Australia make every effort to consolidate a distinctive Australia-Indonesia relationship? If so, how could it be done? Indeed, it was recognized at the time that there was not going to be any easy or quick way of achieving an Indonesian awareness of Australia and Australian aims and objectives. Moreover, the significant differences in culture between the two countries made the task infinitely more complex and challenging.

Chapter Two also presents a closer examination of the pressures on Australian foreign and defence policies created by the changing geo-strategic environment. The requirement for improved relations with Indonesia emerges as a corollary to such pressures and surfaces as a major factor in the conduct of Australian policy on the West New Guinea issue. As set out in Chapter Three, Australia's WNG policy clearly reflected, by 1970, where Australia's foreign policy interests lay.

To fully appreciate the post-1965 phase of Australia-Indonesia relations, however, it is necessary to outline the consolidation of the Suharto regime within Indonesian society. While the government's foreign policy has not been neglected, emphasis falls on the domestic context with a view to charting the policies that resulted in the Indonesian military embedding itself at all major levels of Indonesian society, whether social, economic or political. The focus is on these aspects of Indonesia's domestic policy in order to bring attention not only to the bases of particular issues in Australia's relationship with Indonesia, but also to the major sources of growing discontent within Australia. Although such discontent (the focus of Part Two) was spawned toward the end of the 1960s and embraced the whole canvass of military involvement in Indonesian society, it was, ironically, the conduct of Indonesia's external policy in relation to the key issue of East Timor that provided the major catalyst for disapproval of the Indonesian regime within Australia. The process of adjustment to Indonesia's claim to East Timor paralleled that which was evident in its earlier claim to WNG (an examination of this issue is detailed in Part Three). Where the satisfactory outcome to the WNG

question highlighted the international pressures at work, and the limitations within which Australian foreign policy had to work -- compelling Australia to review its own interests and those of its neighbours and friends -- the East Timor issue reflected more the domestic context of such a process and it emerged as an equally potent constraint on the satisfactory conduct of Australia's Indonesia policy.

CHAPTER ONE

SUHARTO, THE INDONESIAN MILITARY AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF POWER

Introduction

Central to any serious study of the main considerations that should govern Australia's policies towards Indonesia is the need for an appraisal of the kind of regime the 'New Order' in Indonesia really is. With a view, then, to developing a sense of how Government and society have been evolving in Indonesia since the mid-1960s, it is useful to sketch some particular aspects of its political, economic and social life under the 'New Order'. This sketch will also describe Indonesia's attitudes to the world. It is not intended to give a contemporary history of Indonesia's external policies but rather to focus on those aspects which seem to bear on regional security and Indonesia's perceptions of its role in Southeast Asia.

Since Independence, Indonesia's foreign policy has been characterized by the need to overcome an intrinsic vulnerability. This derives from 'an abiding concern for the integrity of a state beset by social diversity and physical fragmentation',[1] as well as a conviction that its vast resources and strategic location would attract the interests of external powers. Running counter to this sense of vulnerability, though, has been a 'continuous sense of regional entitlement based on pride in revolutionary achievement, size of population, land and maritime dimensions, natural resources and strategic location'.[2]

While this paradox has been a major characteristic of Indonesia's world outlook, a strong line of continuity is also evident. While Indonesia's external policies throughout the 1950s and 1960s have reflected phases marked by contrasts of style and external relationships, its policies have also reflected a continuing concern with national and territorial integrity, as well

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1 Leifer, Michael, Indonesia's Foreign Policy, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1983, p.173.

2 Ibid. See also Leifer, Michael, "Attitudes to the World", in Palmier, Leslie, (ed.), Understanding Indonesia, Gower Publishing Company, Vermont, 1985, pp.102-107.

as with the prospect of external intervention in the management of regional affairs. Underlining this outlook has been a strategic perspective that relates to the security of the archipelagic state. This perspective has been sustained through decades of political change in Indonesia, and was to find expression in Indonesia's confrontation with Malaysia and its national claims on West New Guinea and East Timor.

The Coup

On 30 September 1965 an attempted coup took place in Indonesia. Although the full circumstances of the gruesome sequence of events -- which started with the kidnapping and assassination of six prominent Indonesian army generals -- remain obscure, it ruptured the existing political balance between President Sukarno, the army and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI)[1], at that time one of the most powerful communist parties outside the Communist orbit. The ensuing breakdown of Indonesia's political and legal processes gave rise to a wave of anti-communist proscriptions that continued well into 1966, and resulted in deaths which, according to official statistics and various estimates, were between 87 000 and one million respectively.

President Sukarno had dominated the Indonesian Nationalist movement for almost four decades and had been proclaimed President for life but, in the aftermath of these events, he lost effective power in March 1966, and was formally deposed in March 1967. Sukarno died in June 1970 without any public disclosure by the Indonesian authorities of the role he had played in what is still referred to in Indonesia as the 'Gestapu Affair'.[2] Meanwhile,

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[1] Partai Komunis Indonesia.

[2] Differing interpretations of these events show clearly that the motivations for the coup are too complex to be referred to simply as an 'abortive Communist coup'. For analyses of the coup see Lev, Daniel, "Indonesia 1965: the year of the coup", Asian Survey, February 1966, pp.103-110; Wertheim, W.F., "Indonesia before and after the Untung coup", Pacific Affairs, Vol.39, No.102, Spring-Summer 1966, pp.115-127; van der Kroef, Justus M., "Gestapu in Indonesia", Orbis, Vol.10, No.2.,Summer 1966, pp.458-487; Weatherbee, D.E., "Interpretations of Gestapu the 1965 Indonesian coup"' World Affairs, Vol.132, No.4, March 1970, pp.308-316; (Weatherbee focuses on five further analyses of the coup, viz. Pauker, Guy J., The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Indonesia, Santa Monica, Cal., 1969 (Rand Memorandum, RM

amidst the wreckage of Guided Democracy, General Suharto established his 'New Order', became Indonesia's second President in March 1968, and moved toward major changes in both the country's domestic policies and the orientation of its foreign policies.

Internally, the PKI was dissolved and 'Indonesian socialism' was abandoned in favour of an economic policy directed toward salvaging Indonesia's economy. This included dismantling the machinery and controls of the guided economy system, the rescheduling of debts to foreign creditors and attracting foreign aid and investment. Externally, the 'Jakarta-Peking Axis', which was proclaimed by Sukarno in August 1965, was severed, and diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China were suspended.[1] Suharto's foreign policy aimed to reverse the aggressive, expansionist image Indonesia had acquired during confrontation. Indonesia did not wish to become aligned with any of the great power blocs but rather sought to return to the 'active and independent' foreign policy which it had adopted in 1945 and had nominally maintained in the following years.[2] The policy came to be known as 'friends and neighbours' policy in that it sought the friendship and economic support of the larger powers and also to be a 'good neighbour' to the countries in its immediate region.[3]

During the first eighteen months after the coup,[4] the new

5753PR0); Roeder, O.G., The Smiling General, Jakarta, 1969; Uri Ra'Anan, The Politics of the Coup D'etat: five case Studies (New York, 1969); Brackman, Arnold C., The Communist Collapse in Indonesia (New York, 1969). See also Pauker, Guy, "The Gestapu Affair of 1965: Reflections on the Politics of Instability in Indonesia", Southeast Asia, Vol.1, No.1, 1/2 Winter-Spring 1972, pp.43-58; Wanu, K., "Indonesia: Interpreting the Coup", Australian Left Review, December 1970 - January 1971, pp.57-69; Wertheim, W.F., "Suharto and the Untung Coup... The Missing Link", Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol.1, No.2, Winter 1970, pp.50-57.

1 Mozingo, D., Chinese Policy Toward Indonesia, 1949-1967, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1976, p.249 ff.

2 Grant, B., Indonesia, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1964, p.134.

3 Far Eastern Economic Review, 1967 Yearbook, p.217.

4 For a full account of this period see Crouch, Harold, The Army and Politics in Indonesia, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1978, p.135 ff; Sundhaussen, Ulf, The Road to Power: Indonesian Military Politics 1945 - 1967, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1982, pp.207-219 and ch.VI;

regime moved cautiously to restore order and stability in the economic and political spheres. Suharto's central political problem was to chart a course between the entrenched Sukarnoists and anti-Sukarnoists within the military and civilian population, while engineering the downfall of Sukarno, and the end of the PKI as a political force in Indonesia.[1] In the economic sphere, Suharto faced the daunting task of restoring stability to an economy over which the Sukarno Government had lost almost all control. Against this background, and the ensuing violence in both the countryside and the streets of Jakarta and Jogjakarta,[2] on 11 March 1966, Suharto secured the authority to restore order and reactivate government functions. From this point on, Suharto's power was rapidly consolidated.

Despite the magnitude of the national tragedy unfolding before him, involving nothing less than the political and economic collapse of Indonesia, Sukarno clung tenaciously to the threads of political power and, in the face of persistent efforts on the part of his opponents to pressure him to voluntarily step down, attempted to re-establish his authority.[3] In the months leading to the change of regime in March 1966, debate revolving around 'a new definition of the presidential line of succession',[4] reached major

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van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, Asia Pacific Press, Singapore, 1971, pp.17-58.

1 Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, pp.141-142.

2 van der Kroef, J.M., "Indonesia: The Battle of the 'Old' and the 'New Order'", Australian Outlook, Vol.21, No.1, April 1967, pp.25-26, p.30.

3 van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, considered there were three well-defined stages in Sukarno's 'accelerating glide into ignominy': from 30 September 1965 until 11 March 1966, when Sukarno gave Suharto the power to stabilize the domestic situation; from Suharto's assumption of this power until 10 January 1967, when Sukarno defended himself in a statement to the People's Provisional Consultative Assembly (MPRS) against rising criticism; between the time of that statement and 12 March 1967, when the MPRS revoked Sukarno's powers and placed Suharto in power as 'Acting' President. The year following, ending with Suharto's investiture as President, was considered by van der Kroef to have been 'but an epilogue to this story of Sukarno's fall', p.17.

4 Pauker, G.J., Indonesia: The Year of Transition", Asian Survey, Vol.VII, No.2, February 1967, p.142.

proportions, both at the official and public levels. At the forefront were the politicians and the students, while the top military leaders waited and manipulated in the wings. Political manoeuvring marked Sukarno's actions, as he fought to prove that the attempted coup was a minor incident in the ongoing Indonesian revolution and that he was still in control. Moves, and countermoves finally embroiled the military, while Sukarno's opponents and supporters aggressively built up their respective campaigns.[1] Such events represented the struggle between the 'Old Order' and the 'New Order', and led to the signing on 11 March 1966 of the Presidential Letter of Instruction that empowered Suharto 'to guarantee security, tranquility and stability for the smooth functioning of Government'.[2]

With his new powers, Suharto quickly pursued a number of major courses of action.[3] The PKI was immediately outlawed. Attempts by pro-Sukarnoist civilians and stubborn elements of the military to protect Sukarno's position were thwarted by some astute manoeuvering, including purges of the military, bureaucracy and the PNI, massive arrests and the threat of force by Suharto loyalists. Leading figures of the 'Old Order' years and of the September 30 movement were dealt with through a series of trials, 'the most formidable weapon employed to erode Sukarno's political position... achiev[ing] the aim for which they had been primarily held, namely to discredit Sukarno and reduce the support for him'.[4]

Other components of the new regime's political strategy involved the reactivation of withered governmental institutions, and the introduction of a series of decrees during late June and July 1966, which created a framework for a political party based on the rule of law, and indicated a desire on the part of the regime to prepare Indonesia for constitutional government. Apart from ratifying the March 11 delegation of powers to General Suharto, two of the most significant decrees ratified by the People's

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1 Sundhaussen, U., The Road to Power, p.227 ff.

2 Kompas, 14 March 1966, quoted in van der Kroef, J.M., "Indonesia: The Battle of the 'Old' and 'New Order'", p.22.

3 Sundhaussen, U., The Road to Power pp.237-238, pp.245-246.

4 Ibid., p.246 and p.247.

Provisional Consultative Assembly (MPRS) -- the highest constitutional body and by now much changed in composition and outlook by the new political tide, due to the arrest of many of its members and the appointment of new members by Suharto -- related to Indonesia's foreign policy and the Assembly's direction that Suharto's new Cabinet urgently address issues arising from Indonesia's political instability and economic desolation.[1] For all intents and purposes, the military had assumed affective leadership of Indonesia.[2]

Hereafter, the Suharto regime consolidated a course of economic and political stabilization, which was underwritten by a suitable orientation in foreign policy (see below). It enlisted the advice of some of Indonesia's most highly qualified economists, known as 'technocrats',[3] who, in conjunction with outside governments and agencies, addressed Indonesia's immense economic problems. Indeed the 'New Order' had inherited a wrecked economy. It was marked by rising prices, exhausted foreign exchange reserves and a debt repayment in 1966 almost equal to expected export earnings.[4] Moreover, chronic inability to import essential materials, due to an inability to finance such materials had had disastrous effects on industry. Exports were in a downward spiral and the infrastructure of roads, harbours and marketing facilities had deteriorated.[5] Further, endemic corruption, inefficiency and

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1 Sundhaussen, U., The Road to Power, p.239, noted that when the MPRS assembled on 20 June 1966 it called for the establishment of a government to be called the Ampera (Message of the People's Suffering) Cabinet 'with political stabilization, economic rehabilitation, the presentation of an independent foreign policy, and the preparation for general elections as its four main objectives'.

2 Ibid., p.252.

3 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, Fontana, Melbourne, 1980, pp.75-76.

4 Pauker, G.J., "Indonesia's Convalescence", Paper presented for publication in the October 1967 issue of the journal The Round Table, mimeo.: The Rand Corporation, p.7.

5 In the month following the coup, as Sukarno and the PKI fought for their political lives, there was very little attention given by the government to the economy. van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, p.160. For detailed accounts of the state of the economy see FEER, 21 July 1966, pp.107-110 and Penny, D.H., "Survey of Recent Developments",

an increase in smuggling, were commensurate with the fall in purchasing power of the Civil Service salaries.[1] However, the new regime's capacity to respond to the increasing need to mobilize domestic resources to redress these dilemmas was constrained by the vested economic and political interests of politically powerful groups. Hence, the government turned to assistance from overseas and moved to stabilize the economy with measures it considered were well within its capacity, in both political and economic terms.[2]

These measures were formulated initially by economists from the University of Indonesia and rooted in the IMF philosophy that development could only be achieved on the prerequisites of stabilization and liberalization. Accordingly, the government's initial economic goals concentrated on the 'stabilization' and 'rehabilitation' of the Indonesian economy. This meant putting a brake on inflation, which in 1966 was running at 650 percent, restoring international solvency and rehabilitating the eroding infrastructure. While the new programme was dependent on the inflow of capital and consumer goods from overseas, it also meant that the government needed to sharply reduce expenditure, adhere strictly to a balanced budget and to pursue tight-money policies, with a view to restoring international confidence in Indonesia's economic future.[3]

On 4 April 1967, Adam Malik announced that Indonesia would return to the United Nations. Thereafter, events moved rapidly. Indonesia rejoined the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and introduced new legislation to attract both foreign and domestic capital. Japan offered US$30 million in emergency credits and proposed an international conference for the purpose of creating a consortium to assist Indonesia. On 19 July 1967 in Tokyo, Indonesia's non-communist creditors met to discuss the rescheduling

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Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies, No.3, February 1966, pp.1-26; Panglaykim, J. and Arndt, H.W., "Survey of Recent Developments", Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies, No.4, June 1966, pp.1-35.

1 Penny, D.H. and Thalib, Dahlan, "Survey of Recent Developments", Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies, No.6, February 1967, P.2.

2 van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, p.163.

3 Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.320.

of Indonesia's external debts, which at that time amounted to nearly US$3 billion. At a second meeting of the 'Tokyo Club', on 19 September, these creditors, with the enormous resources needed to underwrite Indonesia's stabilization efforts, agreed to reschedule Indonesia's debts. The meeting also saw the creation of the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI). It met regularly over the next five years and served as a mechanism through which loans and grants were raised to assist in Indonesia's economic recovery, while monitoring its economic performance.

The outcome of these meetings, as well as other bilateral talks between Indonesia and her creditors, proved beneficial to the Indonesian economy, enabling Jakarta to overcome, by the early 1970s, the huge debt inherited from the Sukarno Years.[1] These large increases in resources, with two-thirds of the aid coming from the USA and Japan saw a return to a more normal economy by late 1968, and it enabled the Suharto government to realistically pursue its new economic approach, effectively controlling inflation, correcting the balance of payment deficit and promoting the rapid development of the modern sector of the economy.

While the ending of confrontation paved the way for a revision of Indonesia's foreign economic relations, signs of encouragement from the west were, at first, limited. With the signing of the Bangkok Agreement,[2] the pace of reconciliation in economic relations accelerated. But the call for, and establishment of, a multilateral framework for the provision of aid was driven not only by the prospect of economic opportunity but also by major political considerations. With the war in Vietnam still continuing, the

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1 van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia since Sukarno, p.165.

2 In May 1966, a delegation headed by Foreign Minister Malik met with Malaysian representatives to work out a formal agreement for the normalization of relations between Indonesia and Malaysia. The Bangkok talks did not reach complete agreement, as neither side could agree to the concessions the other required. The impasse was broken in late July when the two countries agreed to take note (in a secret annex to the Bangkok Agreement) of Indonesia's stipulation that general elections in Sabah and Sarawak precede diplomatic relations. The Agreement was signed on 11 August 1966 in Jakarta, as was the secret annex. As it turned out, diplomatic relations were established before the holding of elections. See Weinstein, F.B., Indonesian Foreign Policy and the Dilemma of Dependence, pp.337-340; and Mackie, J.A.C, Konfrontasi, p.320.

changes in the domestic situation in Indonesia provided the opportunity to promote compensatory stability in the region. In this context, IGGI emerged as a political symbol to serve that end.

However, the convergence between America's interests and those of Indonesia's economic policy makers, and Indonesia's acceptance of IGGI's generous terms and conditions, gave rise to 'a patently demeaning economic association',[1] with Indonesia's foreign policy elite considering that such foreign aid (and investment), while clearly needed, was a threat to Indonesia's economic and political independence.[2] In the late 1960s, however, criticisms of such a situation were muted, as the Indonesian Government moved steadily to restore stability to the economy. However, by the early 1970s,widespread apprehension and discontent about the 'New Order' Government's foreign economic policies had gained momentum. It focused domestic attention on Indonesia's increased dependence on foreign capital and assistance, government disregard for indigenous businesses, as well as widening dissatisfaction with the Government's First Five Year Development Plan (REPELITA I, 1969-74).

REPELITA I

In mid-1966, the Suharto Government had established a National Planning Body (NPB), and assigned it the task of drafting a five-year plan for the period 1969-73. In late 1968, the NPD's Chairman, Dr Widjojo Nitisastro,[3] predicted that 1969 would see a substantial advance in funds devoted to development.[4] Within a year, while the Suharto Government still placed a high priority on stabilization, there was a discernible shift in policy towards

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1 Leifer, Michael, Indonesia's Foreign Policy, p.116.

2 See Weinstein, Franklin B., Indonesian Foreign Policy and the Dilemma of Dependence, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1976, pp.253-287.

3 The Dean of the Faculty of Economics of the University of Indonesia, and to join the Cabinet in 1971. See Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.242.

4 Allison, J.M., "Indonesia: Year of the Pragmatists", Asian Survey, Vol.IX, No.2, February 1969, p.135.

development goals.[1] Whether this new emphasis was a response to growing domestic criticisms that government policy had been too strictly limited to monetary regulation instead of development, or simply reflected an effort to maintain momentum toward their original goal -- of transition from rehabilitation to development -- it ushered in the much heralded Five Year Plan, which was inaugurated on 1 April, 1969.[2]

The Plan called for investment priorities during the next five years to centre on agricultural improvement, a rehabilitation of the country's infrastructure, export expansion and import substitution, and mining and industry.[3] According to Professor W.W. Rostow, during a private visit to Indonesia the same year, Indonesia was now ready for an economic 'take off'.[4] The rehabilitation and expansion of the rice sector emerged as the main priority for economic planners because of its central role in achieving economic stability. On the industrial side during this period, cement, chemicals and fertilizers were underwritten by public investment, while there was a heightened activity by foreign

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1 Allison, J.M., "Indonesia: The End of the Beginning", Asian Survey, Vol.X, No.2, February 1970, p.149, p.14. See also van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, p.173.

2 REPELITA (REntjana PEmbangunan LIma TAhun) was the third of Indonesia's development plans (Five Year Plan: 1956-60 and Eight Year Plan: 1961-69) was considered, in early 1969 to be 'more realistic and less ambitious... launched at a time when economic conditions are better than they have been for many years and are still improving'. Penny, D.H., and Thalib, Dahlan, "Survey of Recent Developments", Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies, Vol.V, No.1, March 1969, p.1.

3 van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, p.171 ff.

4 This was a reference to the third of five stages of growth in W.W. Rostow's theory of the stages of economic growth (in Rostowian history this lasts for about twenty years). The two major influences in the construction of growth models as a basis for supplemental theories had been Rostow and the Harrod-Domar model, so named after two economists who developed in independently of each other before and after the Second World War. (See Harrod, R.F., "An Essay in Dynamic Theory", Economic Journal, April 1939, and Domar, E.D., "Capital Expansion, Rate of Growth and Employment", Econometrica, April 1946). W.W. Rostow's theory first appeared in 1956 (see "The Take-off into Self-sustained Growth", Economic Journal, March 1956, and The Stages of Economic Growth, Cambridge University Press, 1961).

and domestic investors in the extrative (timber, minerals and petroleum) and import-substituting (textiles, food processing) industries.

While Professor H.W. Arndt at first argued that 'The Indonesian economy has turned the corner',[1] he was to later concede that 'priming the pump of economic development after years of stagnation is proving a slow and difficult business...'.[2] Indeed there were difficulties, with fundamental and interrelated problems -- deriving from unemployment, government controls and corruption and tax evasion -- becoming the main focus of criticism over the next few years, as 'Indonesia seemed to be increasingly caught between the potentially revitalizing effects of huge capital injections and the drag of steady population growth and structural economic impediments'.[3] Nevertheless, given the disarray of the economy in the 1960s, the 'New Order' government achieved considerable success during this period. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was increasing at a rate of 7 percent per annum, while by the early 1970s, gross domestic investment and the country's balance of payments situation was buoyed by the inflow of foreign capital.

Consolidation of the Military-Civilian Relationship

In addition to these attempts at economic reform, purges of the military were by 1969 virtually complete, and the armed forces were effectively centralised under Suharto's control, bringing to an end the interservice rivalries that marked Sukarno's 'Old Order'.[4] In 1970, Suharto, now President -- the ambiguities surrounding his position being removed on 11 March 1968 -- and Minister of Defence and Security and commander of the armed forces,

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1 Arndt, H.W., "Survey of Recent Developments", Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies, Vol.V, No.2, July 1969, p.1.

2 Ibid., Vol.V, No.3, November 1969, p.1.

3 van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, p.181.

4 Under President Sukarno, the four services -- army, airforce, navy and police -- operated virtually autonomously because Sukarno expected the latter to balance the army. However, until the coup in 1965, the armed forces had been rent by personal, political and interservice rivalries which civilians, including Sukarno, had exploited. (See Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, pp.28-33, pp.51-55, pp.79-82, pp.228-241). By 1968, General Suharto had established reasonably firm control over the officer corps.

pursued policies that safeguarded the loyalty of his officers. First, he offered high rewards for loyalty, including political and statutory positions of power and material well-being. Second, in a process that began in late 1969, he overhauled the command structure of the armed forces. Finally, he detained and discharged officers for pro-communist activities.

Of this whole process, Crouch commented:[1]

> In confronting the challenge posed by the PKI's potential for revival, Suharto used unrelenting and often brutal repression. But in consolidating his control over the armed forces, he followed the Javanese principle of alon alon asal kelakon in moving step by step against successive groups of rivals [in]... the army headquarters, [and] ... potential rivals among the regional commanders.

Having established full control over the entire armed forces, Suharto then moved on to deal with the political parties which, despite heavy pressure, had continued to enjoy a measure of independence and remained as potential rallying points for civilian opposition to the regime.

To place the regime's strategy on the Indonesian political structure in perspective, it is important first to take stock of moves by Suharto to consolidate the civilian-military relationship. Although the military dominated the government after 1966, Suharto embarked on a course that sought to establish a pattern of linkages between the military and civilian elements in Indonesian society. While this served practical administrative purposes, it was also intended to create a favourable image -- one based on legitimacy -- among those countries in the West that were contributing to the rebuilding of the Indonesian State.

An important element in this manoeuvring was to change the character of the Cabinet through a series of reshuffles over the ensuing years, by diminishing the number of military members and increasing the civilian representation. Although the political parties retained nominal representation in the Cabinet, the Cabinet became technocratic in nature, with its civilian members performing civil service functions within a political framework established by the generals. Thus, any scope for civilian Ministers to exercise real power was limited by their lack of political backing.[2]

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[1] Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.228.

[2] van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, p.81.

Meanwhile, the army's grip on government tightened with the mobilization of its representatives into key departments in Defence and Security, Internal Affairs and important economic departments.[1] With the domination of the central government accompanied by a similar growth in army representation in regional administration, the army controlled the government machinery at all levels. Clearly, the civilian-military relationship favoured the military in terms of political, economic and administrative power.

The emergence of the army to such a position of dominance in government became a central fact of Indonesian political life, with perhaps the promise that army rule may accommodate a stable political climate. In this context, however, civilian political opinion considered as the military did that if the regime's political framework for the future was successful, it would, in seeking popular acceptance, rest on and include civilian groups. Thus, as J.A.C. Mackie argued:

> The loose coalition of ... elements which supported the New Order elements in the Army in the struggle against the Old Order throughout 1966 hoped for a return to a more democratic style of politics in which they would play an important role as the civilian partners in the army... At that stage Suharto needed the backing of civilian elements in his political tussle with Sukarno and therefore relied heavily in 1966 on... the promise of elections within two years as a means of giving more constitutional and democratic appearance to the new regime....[2]

Crouch, rather more succinctly, added:

> Anxious to avoid giving the impression that they had usurped President Sukarno's powers illegally and wanting to win party support against the President, the army leaders were not in a strong position to withstand pressure from the parties to hold general elections....[3]

However, four problems crystallized for the military. The first related to the political behaviour and conduct of Indonesia's parties where, in the past, compromise elevated less important, but politically popular, issues above those related to other areas of public life, most notably the economy. The military held and,

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1 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, pp.114-116.

2 Mackie, J.A.C., "The Golkar Victory and Party - Aliran Alignments" in Oey Hong Lee, (ed.) Indonesia After the 1971 Elections, Hull Monographs on Southeast Asia No.5, Oxford University Press, London, 1974, p.63.

3 Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.248.

indeed, continued to hold, an unfavourable view of this historical weakness in the multi-party system.[1] Second, if the regime was to hold an election, the PNI and NU parties,[2] both strong bastions of the 'Old Order' element, could possibly attract traditional sources of support in Java, including former PKI supporters.[3] Both these problems had the potential to undermine the 'New Order's' economic stabilization programme. Third, elements within the military were expressing a concern that the PKI, through vote-hungry political and religious organizations, could make a comeback.[4] The fourth problem centred on how the army could manipulate the electoral and political arrangements to ensure the emerging role of the military in Indonesian society if an election were held.

By the end of 1967, debate and divisions within the 'New Order' over the strategy it should adopt towards the government and the army on the one hand and the old parties on the other, whom they saw as the main adversary, gave rise to schisms, and the eventual breakdown of the 'Old Order'. This process was nurtured by systematic purges and checking between the larger parties (PNI and NU) without destabilizing the party-aliran nexus in Indonesian politics,[5] and presaged the government's decision in early 1968 to postpone the elections until 1971.

Notwithstanding the precedents and excuses for indefinite postponements, now part of Indonesian history, the decision to conduct the election in 1971 was announced in November 1969. Suharto was however, concerned that support for the nine existing political parties would more or less correspond with primordial loyalties (religious affiliations, ethnic divisions or aliran, according to locality). To ensure control over the Parliament and

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1 Alfian, A., "Trends in Indonesian Politics" in Yong Mun Cheong (ed.), Trends in Indonesia: Proceedings and Background Paper, Singapore University Press, Singapore, 1972, pp.54-55; Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.244.

2 Respectively the Indonesian Nationalist Party (Partia Nasional Indonesia) and the Muslin Scholars' League (Nahadatul Ulama).

3 Mackie, J.A.C., "The Golkar Victory and Party - Aliran Alignments". p.63.

4 van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, p.221.

5 Mackie, J.A.C., "The Golkar Victory and Party - Aliran Alignments", pp.63-64.

regional assemblies, and prodded by non-party 'technocrats', now entrenched in positions of influence, including seats in Parliament, he elevated Golkar[1] as the standard-bearer for his government. While this strategy was designed to see the non-party technocrats hold and gain seats, even a balance of power, in the Parliament, the structure of Golkar was fragile, and there was little confidence at the beginning that it could draw electoral support.[2]

During the next twelve months, however, the Suharto regime moved 'to create conditions in which political party adherents of all sorts felt it to be in their interests to switch their vote to the Golkar'.[3] This included mobilizing civil servants to throw their support behind Golkar; wooing the Muslim parties at the leadership (Kiyais) and grassroots (pesantrens) levels; and intimidation at all levels, but particularly directed toward the village leaders (lurah).[4] From early 1971, through to the last month of campaigning in June, the Golkar movement had gained considerable momentum. However, 'through excessive pressure and political 'overkill'',[5] the regime had created conditions which caused the political parties great difficulties. This included the screening of candidates and voter lists, the placing of limitations on campaigning and on the naming of certain doctrines (including Sukarnoism and Marxism), as well as restrictions on any questioning of the Pantja Sila or the government's Repelita.

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1 Sekber Golkar (Golongan Karya), the Joint Secretariat of the Functional Group, was created in 1964 by the army to check the influence of the PKI.

2 Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.264.

3 Ibid., p.267.

4 Mackie, "The Golkar Victory", p.68, considered the question of intimidation was 'a highly controversial one in which it is impossible for an outsider to know all the facts', while Crouch, The Army and Politics, p.268, argued strongly that all the party members, including former PKI supporters, were subjected to intimidation. This included 'the arrest of local leaders alleged to have infringed electoral regulations, visits by local officials and military men, and raids on houses of party activists in Central Java in unsuccessful attempts to find arms'.

5 Mackie, J.A.C., "The Golkar Victory", p.67.

It can be seen that, throughout the five-year period leading to the election in 1971, Indonesia's 'New Order' and the coagulation of Suharto's power base was characterized by a web of military/civilian alliances. At one time or another, religious groups (Muslim and Christian), intellectuals, civil servants and students supported the political role of the military. This connexion, originally rooted in an anti-communist strategy, went through a transition which saw the military emerge as the stronger, as it moved to maintain Indonesia's domestic security and provide economic stability. Its legitimacy was predicated on its role as the guardian of national unity and was reinforced by its image as a modernizing force, capable of guiding Indonesia toward self-sustaining economic growth. This received expression in an army-administrator-economist elite, with the army as the dominant partner.[1]

By 1972, the Repelita, introduced to stimulate output in both the subsistence and export sectors of the Indonesian economy, and to promote the injections of large capital for future growth, had yielded results in both the modern and subsistence sectors. Gross National Product (GNP) was growing at six percent per year, export figures had been boosted and agriculture (in particular, rice) had been stimulated. Inflation was under control and the confidence of foreign investors and aid donors was strong. But public policy was determined by the military-power base of the 'New Order' and their economist advisers. It was basically an administrative framework embracing only a peripheral level of popular participation. The governing elite perceived the appropriate role of political participation to be that of passive approval or legitimation through controlled symbolic acts. The General Election of 3 July 1971, was intended to be just such an act of symbolic legitimation.

Pressures on the Indonesian State

The Indonesian passage to consolidation was not without its problems. Clashes between the regime's programmes and the web of interests and emotions that made up Indonesia's complex society, stimulated a tide of debate that ultimately found expression in

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[1] Britton, P., "The Indonesian Army: 'Stabiliser and Dynamiser'", in Mortimer, R., (ed.), Showcase State, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1973, p.84.

instances of social strife and political conflict. On another level, corruption was more widespread in Indonesia than ever before, and of particular concern to Suharto. He embarked on a public campaign in late 1967, which included the launching of a special team, headed by the Attorney General, Sugih Arto, to combat corruption. However, this proved ineffective[1] and impelled significant sections of Indonesian society, including the student organizations to keep the issue of corruption to the forefront of public consciousness. While corruption in government was the dominant theme of many of their protests and demonstrations, rising prices and civil rights were to emerge, with increasingly anti-militarist overtones, to become the important issues in the student movement over the next four years.[2]

Instances of social and political conflict manifested themselves in Indonesia during this period at two levels. First, the Chinese community was exposed to endless harassment, extortions, and in a few instances, to outbursts of violence. Recognizing the harm such excesses did to Indonesia's reputation overseas and the importance of Indonesia's Chinese to economic recovery in Indonesia, the Suharto government moved to find a solution to the perplexing problem of such anti-Chinese activities. In 1967, Suharto, as Acting President, appointed a State Committee for Chinese Affairs. Although relations with China were 'frozen',[3] over the ensuing years Suharto made moves to bring the local Chinese back into the Indonesian fold and pressed for their assimilation into the national culture. This included promoting

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1 For a discussion of this short-lived campaign and its outcome, See Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.296. See also Pauker, G.J., "Indonesia: The age of Reason?", Asian Survey, Vol.VIII, No.2, February 1968, p.138.

2 Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.309 ff.

3 Prior to an outbreak of anti-Chinese riots in Jakarta in mid-1967, Foreign Minister Adam Malik had successfully argued to Suharto that the relationship with China be maintained. However, the riots convinced Suharto and others in the government 'that the expected long-term benefit of maintaining diplomatic relations was outweighed by their politically destablising consequences in the short run'. Hence, relations were 'frozen', a term coined by Malik to leave the diplomatic door open. Malik was never, as he wished, able to 'normalize' relations with The People's Republic of China. Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.333.

the adoption of Indonesian citizenship to those Chinese who had not already done so and calling on Parliament to revise the dual citizenship agreement between Indonesia and China.[1] Second, outbursts of animosities between Moslems and Christians was eroding hope of religious tolerance following the turbulent events of 1965-66. Again the government was vigorous in its response, and Suharto publicly condemned a number of incidents that had erupted in 1967.[2] However, ensuing efforts to initiate dialogue fell away under the weight of further incidents which continued into the 1970s.[3]

While the regime was generally successful in maintaining internal security throughout the country, there was a significant resurgence in the 1966-68 period of Communist activities in Indonesia. The PKI again made its presence felt with extensive reorganizing activities and isolated acts of violence in Central and East Java, climaxing in the establishment of a strong redoubt in South Blitar. This was destroyed in July and August 1968, following a progressive build up of Indonesian army operations during the year.[4]

The fact that remnants of the PKI were still active and necessitated a public show of force on the part of the Indonesian army did not help the government in relation to another contentious issue -- that of political prisoners. In 1969, as the press and public debate centred on the prospects of a general election in 1971 and Suharto was concluding his sweep of the entire military organization, public reaction began smouldering at the August announcement that over two thousand communist prisoners would be settled on Buru Island in the Moluccas. While this reflected a government response to international pressures, domestic pressures were also compelling. Incidences of the persecution and deaths of political prisoners compelled Suharto to initiate a publicity

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1 van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno. p.238.

2 The Makassar incident on 1 October 1967, was the most conspicuous.

3 See Coppel, Charles A., "China and the Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia", in Fox, J.J., (et al), Indonesia: Australian Perspectives, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, 1980, pp.730-733.

4 Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.224. See also van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, ch.5.

campaign aimed at accustoming the Indonesian people to the idea of releasing large number of prisoners. This coincided with reports that over one quarter of the 116 000 communists detained following the coup would be released by the end of 1969.[1]

While the government seemed predisposed to releasing prisoners and was considering a variety of schemes to facilitate their return to society (and the public's response was generally favourable), incidents of persecution continued to preoccupy the government. Incidents of this kind, together with continuing PKI activity, presented as many difficulties for the government in proceeding with their plans, as it did for the released prisoners.[2] Despite all its problems, however, and as we noted earlier, the Suharto regime maintained its momentum toward consolidation 'through the militarization of the bureaucratic administration, the purging, centralization and integration of the four armed services, and the reduction of the political parties and mass organizations to sterility and powerlessness'.[3]

Yet, in significant ways, the 'New Order' was beginning to display characteristic attitudes and norms that marked the colonial period under Dutch rule. Ricklefs considered:

> Like the Dutch period, and unlike the Japanese and Guided Democracy periods, the new order sought to control rather than mobilise the population; it believed that the government's primary responsibilities to its subjects could be fulfilled through economic development and welfare policies.[4]

However, while the Suharto regime was successful into the early 1970s in areas where the Dutch had failed (education, health and welfare), it was unable to remove Indonesia's basic poverty. On a more negative level, the regime was increasingly becoming

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1 van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, p.115; Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.225; Allison, J.M., "Indonesia: The End of the Beginning?", p.147.

2 Allison, J.M., "Indonesia: The End of the Beginning?", p.147.

3 Ward, K., "Indonesia's Modernization: Ideology and Practice", in Mortimer, R., (ed.), Showcase State, p.68. See also H.W. Arndt's analyses extending over the period June 1966 to July 1974 in Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies.

4 Ricklefs, M.C., A History of Modern Indonesia, Macmillan, London, 1981, p.272.

predisposed to imprisonment on a much larger scale, as well as the torture of prisoners. These elements, coupled with the proliferation of corruption in State and private financing, and the concentration of power into the hands of a small elite, compelled Crouch to conclude:

> popular frustration and discontent continued to spread, while the government showed no signs of being capable of tackling the basic long-term problems of growing unemployment, overpopulation, and poverty. Despite the government's achievement of political 'stability', it had no program to cope with the inevitable growth of popular discontent which it faced, except to rely on the instruments of repression.[1]

Thus, by the 1970s, domestic opposition had emerged as a new factor in Indonesian political life under the 'New Order', as the rising expectations of those who had opposed Sukarno or suffered from his policies were dissipated. Student groups, once the driving force in launching an anti-communist and anti-Sukarno coalition and in bringing the Suharto administration into power in 1966, now expressed dissatisfaction at corruption, restrictions on personal freedoms and graduate unemployment. By 1973, student complaints and actions against the 'rigid and unresponsive' government found support among Indonesian intellectuals and the Indonesian press, which had hitherto refrained from all but the most circumspect of criticism.[2] In the commercial arena, Indonesian entrepreneurs experienced and suffered from the tight credit and high interest rates demanded by the government's stabilization policies, and from the competition of foreign and locally domiciled Chinese firms which increasingly received government favour.

The legitimacy of the Suharto regime was increasingly called into doubt as knowledge of political patronage and corruption widened.[3] Political patronage in particular became a major target

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[1] Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.351.

[2] Sampson, A.A., "Indonesia 1973: A Climate of Concern", Asian Survey, Vol.XIV, No.2, February 1974, pp.164-165.

[3] Indonesians distinguished between low-level corruption, to which few objected, the high-level corruption of the elite, which was intensely disliked. Throughout the economy, this form of corruption highlighted the entrenched position of political patronage in Indonesian society. Harold Crouch, in observing its intensity, argued that Suharto:

> In full control of the government machinery... dispersed patronage widely, with the result that his

of civilian resentment, with the state-owned oil corporation, Pertamina, and its head, Ibnu Sutowo, becoming the main focus of debate in the mid-1970s.[1] As the years passed, many specific causes of complaint stimulated opposition in Indonesia to the Suharto regime.[2] While the government's response was to offer investigations and cosmetic measures, those at the apex remained immune to these procedures. Essentially, corruption and militarism were to remain major sources of civilian dissatisfaction.[3]

Meanwhile, the Suharto government became irrevocably entrenched in the political structure through the success of Golkar. Turned into a large-scale machine for winning the parliamentary election in 1971, it secured a decisive victory,

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> leadership gained a broad base of support. While his closest confidants continued to be his old colleagues from the Diponegoro division and the West Irian campaign, the other divisions were well represented in the military elite (Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, pp.236-237).

And continued:

> These 'political' and 'financial' generals exercised great influence over the patronage system. They played a major role in determining appointments in both the military hierarchy and the government administration [and]... with the implementation of policy, particularly in such fields as foreign investment, the allocation of construction contracts, and the opening of other business opportunities that had implications for the smooth functioning of the patronage machine. Thus, many officers were beholden to them for important appointments or profitable business opportunities.... (Ibid., p.308).

1 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, ch.7.

2 For example, in 1972, the envisioned Indonesia Disneyland project, the 'Mini Affair', headed by Suharto's wife, Tien Suharto, and funded by the government, was the target of demonstrations and student-sponsored discussion groups which focused on its extravagance and probity; the controversial marriage bill introduced in 1973; the ill effects of foreign aid, and the government's overall development strategy, which was the subject of the 'Petition of October 24', which conveyed student concern over other issues such as rising prices, abuse of power, unemployment and the lack of public participation in government decision making.

3 See Crouch, Harold, "The New Order: The Prospect for Political Stability", Unpublished paper, Department of Political Science, the National University of Malaysia (Mimeo: n.d.). Crouch examines other sources of instability.

receiving 62.8 percent of the votes cast. Golkar won absolute majorities in all except three provinces, securing 227 seats, while the NU and PNI parties secured only 18 percent (58 seats) and 6.93 percent (20 seats) respectively.[1] Golkar's ideological message rested on modernization and development, while its candidates contrasted Golkar's pragmatism with what they termed the ideological bankruptcy of the political parties. The GOLKAR campaign was aided by a military and civilian bureaucratic effort from the national to village levels -- a process which opened it to charges of coercion, open intimidation and 'bulldozer tactics'.[2] Whatever the admixture of coercion and voluntary support, GOLKAR's victory was unarguable and interpreted as providing electoral legitimation to the physical fact of military predominance. Conversely, the already small influence of the political parties was even further limited. On one level, Golkar's election victory in 1971 and later in 1977, together with power of appointment, enabled the government to control the vast majority of both the People's Representative Council (DPR)[3] and the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR)[4] throughout the period under review.

On another level, Golkar's organizational structure permitted the regime to build an alliance with the bureaucracy, in opposition to civilian politicians. While military men remained the main arbiters of power at the top, day-to-day administration became a shared bureaucratic-military concern. Thus, a system of government, which maintained the dominance of the established military and bureaucratic elite, while serving its social, political and financial interests, was institutionalized.

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1 See Van Marle, A., "Indonesian Electoral Geography Under Orla and Orba", in Mackie, J.A.C., Indonesia After the 1971 Elections, Table 4, pp.58-59. For an analysis see Mackie, J.A.C., Indonesia After the 1971 Elections, pp.70-75.

2 See Peter McCawley, The Sunday Review, 21 March 1971. See also his pieces in The National Times, 10-15 May 1971, and 2-7 August 1971. McCawley was then a Ph.D student in the Department of Economics, RSPS, ANU.

3 Dewan Perwakilan Raykat - the Lower House of the parliament.

4 Majelis Permusyawaratan Raykat (MPR) - the Upper House of the Parliament which meets every five years to elect the President and decide State policy.

Indonesia's International Outlook

An integral component in this process in Indonesia was its foreign policy. Clearly, Suharto's domestic policies were a product of a perceived need to stabilize Indonesian society, at all levels, before it could secure the confidence of those countries willing to offer economic assistance and investment. Although slow to respond initially, Western powers soon committed themselves to programmes involving enormous injections of aid. In the ensuing years these programmes, along with substantial investment, expanded at a rate commensurate with the changes in the direction of Indonesia's foreign policy. Integral here was Indonesia's move away from the political orientations that marked the Sukarno era and toward a new 'pragmatism' in its views on international and regional affairs.

Since its early independence, Indonesia's foreign policy has found expression in the maxim 'independent and active'.[1] It expressed a desire to have more than a passive role in global events -- as well as to play a significant part in regional peace and security -- and derived from values and attitudes that have sustained 'a continuing suspicion of large power motives and policies in general [and]... a strong indigenous nationalism'.[2] Even under the 'New Order', this longstanding distrust of external powers was to be sustained, although moderated by an evident 'pragmatism', in relations with America and Japan. Nevertheless, the independent and active formula was to remain a prominent ideal, if expressed mainly in symbolic form.[3]

At first, however, such pragmatism was itself, tempered by an attempt to avoid appearing to move entirely into the Western camp. This was first evidenced in a statement by the new Foreign Minister, Mr Adam Malik, to the Indonesian Parliament and press on 4 April 1966, in which he declared that Indonesia would pursue an

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1 For a discussion on the nature of this idiom, see Weinstein, Franklin B., Indonesian Foreign Policy and the Dilemma of Dependence, pp.161-205.

2 Morrison, Charles E., and Astri Suhrke, (eds.), Strategies of Survival: The Foreign Policy Dilemmas of Smaller Asian States, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1978, p.198.

3 Leifer, Michael, "Attitudes to the World", in Leslie Palmier (ed.), Understanding Indonesia, p.105.

independent and active foreign policy and adjust itself continuously:

> to the various developments in the international world and the situation and requirements of Indonesian national strength and of the Indonesian Revolution....

Malik continued:

> The Government will review and re-evaluate the steps taken in the field of foreign policy by the former Government. Without reducing efforts to unite all forces in the world which are anti-imperialists, anti-colonialist and anti-neo-colonialist... the Government will endeavour widest possible cooperation with the international world, politically, socially and in the cultural field.[1]

Thereafter, events moved quickly. In May 1966 Suharto considered confrontation should be settled quickly.[2] while plans were made for a delegation, made up essentially of elements of the KOGM (Operational Command to Crush Malaysia), to make a goodwill visit to Malaysia. This took place on 27 May, presaging announcements before the end of the month that Indonesia would join the International Monetary Fund (IMF),[3] and that Malik had met with Malaysian Deputy Premier, Tun Abdul Razak, in Bangkok, where they agreed in principle to an end to confrontation. Razak returned this visit on 11 August 1966 where this principle was formalized.

These overtures gave rise to a two year period in which Indonesia not only moved to restore balance to its independent, active foreign policy -- including most significantly the abandonment of links with The People's Republic of China -- but also to, correspondingly, draw foreign aid and investment capital. There was however, a strong degree of ambiguity in early Indonesian foreign policy pronouncements, reflecting a process of slow and deliberate disengagement from the trappings of the Sukarno era. To

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1 Adam Malik, Statement, "Indonesia's Foreign Policy as based on the Pantja Sila Principles", Department of Information, Jakarta, 1966. Quoted in part in Far Eastern Economic Review, Yearbook (1967), p.217.

2 Straits Times, 2 May 1966.

3 Made by the Vice-Premier for Economic and Financial Affairs, Sultan Hamengku Buwono. See Pauker, G., "Indonesia: The Year of Transition", p.149.

illustrate, Malik's statement in April 1966, and one by Suharto[1] four months later, were threaded with a new pragmatism, yet they retained some of the idealistic themes that were promulgated during the Sukarno period. While this ambiguity could be explained in terms of the unsettled, domestic situation and the Indonesian leadership's concern for 'the people's wishes', it slowly faded as the Suharto regime consolidated its domestic power base, and as Malik was resisted by power-brokers within it.

For Malik was a strong link to the Sukarno period and he continued to embrace some of the rhetoric and ideals that had underwritten the 'Old Order' foreign policy. While his appointment in March 1966 to the deputy prime ministership and to the position of Foreign Minister reflected Suharto's wish to maintain the appearance of continuity with the past, Malik resisted moves that he considered would heavily entrench Indonesia with those Communist or non-Communist states that could give massive amounts of aid. This found its critics, particularly from those who, fearing internal, though externally supported, communist subversion, placed security consideration above everything else.[2] Thus, while Suharto and these elements within the regime continued to pay lip-service to continuing Indonesia's struggle against imperialism and colonialism, they also moved to reconstruct Indonesia's relations with the West, recognized by Suharto to be the only possible source of financial aid of the extent Indonesia planned to pursue.[3] In such circumstances, the responsibility for the winding down of confrontation was taken from Malik and placed in the hands of elements from within the military sympathetic to this dilemma, most notably Ali Murtopo.[4] Once the confrontation issue was settled, Malik regained control of Indonesia's foreign policy. However,

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1 Suharto summarized the basic principles of Indonesia's foreign policy in his State Address: To conduct an independent and active foreign policy in the best interests of the nation, and to 'continue the struggle against imperialism and colonialism in all their forms and manifestations'. Far Eastern Economic Review, 1968 Yearbook, pp.195-196.

2 Horn, R.C., 'Indonesia's Response to Changing Big Power Alignments', Pacific Affairs, p.332.

3 Sundhaussen, U., The Road to Power, p.239.

4 Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.332.

this underlying conflict was to remain a constant element in policy making up to, and straddling, the East Timor crisis.

In the meantime, relations with China had been maintained until internal pressures forced the government to 'freeze' them in October 1967. Subsequent relations between the two countries were underlined by a marked hostility, with China particularly bitter over Indonesia's treatment of its Chinese residents.[1] The thaw in international attitudes toward the communist power at the turn of the decade found Malik open to the idea of normalizing relations.[2] For Malik, such an achievement would not only broaden Indonesia's contacts with the great powers, but also provide greater flexibility on the international stage, while reaffirming Indonesia's 'independent and active' foreign policy. However, hardline elements in the military -- which had always harboured a deep suspicion and resentment of China's alleged complicity in the coup -- continued to be intrinsically suspicious of the potential for communist subversion. This distrust, fuelled by domestic resentment particularly on the part of the traditionalist-oriented Muslims, straddled the early 1970s when detente saw a convergence between China and the USA, with the former taking a seat at the United Nations.

The constraints that were so strongly evident in Indonesia's relationship with China were not as pronounced in its dealings with the Soviet Union. Although Indonesia's 'independent and active' foreign policy enabled it to broaden its political contacts, it was the Soviet Union's status as a creditor that sustained the Indonesian - USSR link in the late 1960s. At that time, the Soviet Union's willingness to maintain a residual relationship with Indonesia coincided with the latter's desire to dilute the pro-Western nature of its foreign economic and political policies. Thus, 'The relationship with the Soviet Union, however uneasy, was cultivated up to a point because it served as an important symbol

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1 van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, pp.184-189.

2 Far Eastern Economic Review, 1970 Yearbook, p.51. Evidence of Malik's desire to restore normal diplomatic relations dates back to 1970. See van der Kroef, J.M., "Before the Thaw: Recent Indonesian Attitudes toward China", Asian Survey, No.13, May 1973, pp.513-530.

of non-alignment'.[1] However, the Soviet Union's growing global role -- which by the late 1960s encompassed the Indian Ocean and maritime Southeast Asia -- aroused Indonesia's distrust, and it hampered any further development of the relationship at this time. Indeed, the Soviet's proposal in late 1968 of a new collective security system in Asia, while rejected by all Asian capitals, met with a particularly cool response from Indonesia. On Indonesia's part, it reflected not only an historical suspicion of external powers but also a slowly emerging policy, if not proclivity, towards consolidating 'national resilience'.[2] In this context a strong economy and ideology was of greatest importance in Indonesia's national defence policy. For Suharto, military pacts were of no use to Indonesia or any other member of ASEAN,[3] and he was no less moved by the impending withdrawal of the British and the Americans from the region than by the increasing Soviet profile in it.[4]

The United States, however, rapidly became a strong source of strength and support to Indonesia, where civil aid for economic stabilization and growth played a major role in consolidating a favourable domestic political situation. This relationship,

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1 Leifer, Michael, Indonesia's Foreign Policy, p.126.

2 At the opening Address of the Conference on Regionalism in Southeast Asia on 22 October 1974, President Suharto concluded:

> 'National resilience' is... needed to guarantee the process of nation building [it]... means more than just conventional defence and security capabilities and is not merely related to military force alone, nor is it in any way connected with aggressive motives against any country. 'National Resilience' means, internally: the ability to ensure the necessary social changes while keeping one's own identity, with all its vulnerability, and externally, it is the ability to face all external threats, regardless of their manifestations (Address by the President of the Republic of Indonesia, in Regionalism in Southeast Asia, CSIS, Jakarta, 1975, p.8).

This perception and interpretation of regional security is examined in relation to those held by the other ASEAN states in Shee Poon-Kim, A Decade of ASEAN, 1967-1977, Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nanyang University, Occasional Paper Series, No.69, April 1977, pp.193-194.

3 The Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

4 van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, pp.193-194.

however, was not only economic in nature, for it increasingly displayed powerful military characteristics, especially after the re-organization of Indonesia's military forces at the end of 1969. In the words of Harold Crouch:

> In the early years of the New Order, the aid-giving countries as a group had believed that Indonesia could not afford new military supplies, but the success of the economic stabilization program strengthened the hand of the military men, keen to acquire new armament. American aid for the Army's 'civil mission' activities had been resumed in 1967 with the supply of road-building equipment... but President Nixon's visit to Indonesia in 1969, American military assistance expanded.[1]

While Indonesia moved cautiously but decisively throughout this period to consolidate a leading role in the management of regional order -- through the establishment of ASEAN (1967), convening the Jakarta Conference on Cambodia (1970), adopting Malaysia's ZOPFAN,[2] and, later, a willingness to participate in the International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS), designed to supervise the cease-fire in South Vietnam[3] -- its growing economic and military links seemed to compromise its stance on "non-alignment". Moreover, regional security developments in the mid-1970s saw Indonesia attach increasing importance to the western strategic net. However, as Nishihara viewed this situation, tying it into Suharto's concept of 'National Resilience':

> While the US withdrawal from Southeast Asia might make the nations of the region aware of the importance of self-reliance, such withdrawal might induce another great power to fill the 'vacuum'. In order to avoid the predominance of any single power, Indonesia would like to see the competitive presence of plural forces playing themselves off against one another. Thus, while Indonesia may not join any military alliance, it does not mind seeing the other members of ASEAN being protected by a friendly superpower, that is the US. Indeed, in an official technical sense, Indonesia is the only non-aligned ASEAN member.[4]

By the early 1970s, then, Indonesia's prestige and its role in the

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1 Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.337.

2 ZOPFAN (Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality) was adopted by the ASEAN bloc to promote neutrality and to keep the region free of great power involvement.

3 That Indonesia should play such a role, was suggested by President Nixon when he visited Jakarta in July 1969.

4 Nishihara, M., Regional Security Developments, p.51.

region had benefited from the changes arising from great power detente. The conservative political orientation of the 'New Order' leadership, together with practical considerations in international politics, saw a devolution of responsibility, rather than power, from the major western powers to Indonesia in terms of maintaining a certain degree of regional order within non-Communist Southeast Asia.

The Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Nexus

While economic progress was relatively impressive and political stability appeared to provide the grounds for optimism -- with natural resources (essentially oil) gaining international recognition in the early to mid-1970s -- there were growing criticisms both inside and outside Indonesia that such economic growth was being achieved at the cost of growing inequalities at all levels of Indonesian society.[1] This criticism focused, in particular, on the Suharto Government's overall development strategy. It was argued that this strategy embraced economic policies which elevated the position of the foreign investor over that occupied by indigenous entrepreneurs,[2] and that it was mismanaged and eroded by corruption.[3] All these factors were considered to be major reasons behind the government's failure to confront the country's (especially rural) poverty and unemployment.[4] By extension, this criticism concluded that such factors were not reformable mistakes or malfunctions, but intrinsic features of the structure of the 'New Order' government as a

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1 Legge, J.D., Indonesia Since Independence (Third Edition), Prentice-Hall, Sydney, 1980, pp.176-178.

2 Crouch, H., The Army and Politics, p.310. See also Robison, R., "Culture, Politics, and Economy in the Political History of the New Order", in Anderson B. and Kahin, A., (eds.), Interpreting Indonesian politics: Thirteen Contributions to the Debate, Cornell Modern Indonesian Project, Interim Report Series, No.62, Ithaca: Cornell University, 1982, pp.131-148, esp. p.148.

3 See Mortimer, R., (ed.), Showcase State, chs. 3 and 5.

4 For a discussion of these issues see Sundrum, R.M. and Booth, A.E., 'Income Distribution in Indonesia: Trends and Determinants', in Fox, J.J. (et al), Indonesia: Australian Perspectives, pp.455-485.

whole.[1] While the rise of the 'New Order' was tied directly to the linkages that had been made with foreign economic assistance and investment, the narrowly-held base of wealth, upon which the government projected growing international and regional power and prestige, still meant little in national and domestic terms.

1974 marked the beginning of a period in which genuine dissatisfaction with this situation became more acute, erupting into open rioting at the time of the visit of the Japanese Prime Minister (Tanaka) to Jakarta in January 1974. Throughout the previous eight years, Japan loomed predominantly in Indonesia's economic revival, absorbing a major part of Indonesia's raw materials and providing investment and technical assistance.[2] By the early 1970s, growing resentment over foreign nomination focused increasingly on Japan's economic role. While the riots reflected divisions and factional rivalry within the upper echelons of the 'New Order' government,[3] the conditions that led to the disturbances were only to be exacerbated by the subsequent drop in foreign investment and the encroaching world recession.

Straddling this domestic turmoil was a period that saw Indonesia's 'independent and active' foreign policy -- concreted in anti-communism and strongly inclined toward the USA -- come under stress, with the American withdrawal from Vietnam in 1973 and the subsequent communist victory in 1975.[4] This period also gave rise

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1 For an attempt to place these judgements in a broader historical perspective see Mackie, J.A.C., "Indonesia Since 1945 - Problems of Interpretation" in Interpreting Indonesian Politics, pp.117-130. Mackie argues, that any honest attempt to explain the policies pursued by the Suharto Government should use 'a more pluralistic and historically grounded approach ... not the superimposing of externally derived explanatory models or irrelevant ethical stands', p.118.

2 See van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, pp.165-166 and pp.203-204.

3 An important element in these riots was competition between two of the military's most powerful figures, General Sumitro, Chief of the Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Kopkamtib)and Deputy Commander of the Armed Forces, and Major General Ali Murtopo, the head of Aspri.

4 Dipoyudo, Kirdi, "Changes and Trends in the Indonesian Foreign policy" in Suryadinata, Leo and Siddique, Sharon, (eds.), Trends in Indonesia II, Institute of Southeast Asian

to events in Portugal and Timor which, coupled with developments in Indo-China, enhanced old fears of vulnerability and subversion. For Indonesia, then, by the mid-1970s, domestic and international dimensions were converging, and there were:

> many points of substance upon which opposition could seize [in particular] the manner in which the former Portuguese colony in East Timor was incorporated into the Republic... Resentment of the repression of dissident voices and Islam's growing sense of isolation [and]...the growing dissatisfaction with the regime's economic policies.[1]

By the late 1970s, widening dissatisfaction with the government found increasingly volatile expression in student and intellectual circles, and in the press.[2] This gave rise to a concomitant repressiveness on the part of the government which, while reflecting an increasing sense of vulnerability, reflected that the 'New Order' government 'no longer commanded the kind of consensus which had supported it in the late 1960s and early 1970s'.[3]

Conclusion

As we have seen, the emergence to power in the mid-1960s of the 'New Order' government brought together an informal and loose coalition of groups from within Indonesian society. This coalition -- which comprised of students, intellectuals, and members of the Islamic and army leaderships -- at first provided the 'New Order' leadership with the basis to preserve the appearance of constitutional democracy. With the passage of time, this broad basis of support for the regime dwindled, and many of its initial

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Studies, Singapore, 1981, pp.127-128.

[1] Legge, J.D., Indonesia Since Independence, p.175.

[2] Incidents included, in late 1977, large-scale street demonstrations in Jakarta, Bandung and Surabaya over the role of the military in Indonesia's political life. These culminated in mass marches on Hero's Day (10 November) and Human Rights Day (10 December). Student Councils that year also called for the right to criticize the government's economic policies. In 1978, the students attacked the government over corruption, the dominance of foreign capital in the economy and the impotence of the Indonesian Parliament in a publication called The White Book of the 1978 Student's Struggle. It also criticized growing inequalities in Indonesian society and the wealth and lifestyle of Suharto.

[3] Legge, J.D., Indonesia Since Independence, p.180.

supporters became its opponents. This gave rise to a sense of vulnerability on the part of the government, and to a commensurate increase in its repression and authoritarianism. By the mid-1970s, the consensus which had sustained the Suharto Government in the preceding years had gradually evaporated, leaving military power as the regime's major source of authority.

Where this sense of vulnerability arose from an historical concern with Indonesia's social diversity and its bearing on the integrity of the Indonesian State, similarly, a sense of vulnerability to external intervention has been a common and consistent feature of Indonesia's international outlook. Yet, since Independence, Indonesia's foreign policy has been characterized by the phrase 'independent and active', and it has been employed at different times to indicate a desire for an active role in both global and regional developments. Since the mid-1960s however, the 'New Order' government has sought to project an image of a moderate, non-aligned government, development-oriented, and a cornerstone of stability in the Southeast Asian region. The latter took on significant dimensions following the British and American military withdrawals from the region, and as the Soviets expanded their strategic interests in the archipelago. By the mid-1970s, the region had been subjected to adverse changes. These, together with developments in East Timor, only served to confirm the regime's continuing concern for the integrity of the archipelagic state, and its adherence to a strategic perspective that has been in existence since Indonesia's Independence.

The following two chapters concentrate on the Australian Government's approach to Indonesia's 'New Order'. They trace the major assumptions as to what Australia's interests required and the methods it employed to accommodate those interests at a time of unprecedented change in the international environment. The pressures on Australian foreign policy emanated both from changes in Indonesia itself and the regional environment, and from Australia's changing views of its national interests vis-a-vis Indonesia.

CHAPTER TWO

INDONESIAN REHABILITATION, REGIONAL COHESION AND THE PRIMACY OF SECURITY: AUSTRALIA'S STRATEGIC REORIENTATION AND RAPPROCHEMENT WITH INDONESIA

Introduction

This chapter covers the period from 1965 to early 1970, and it outlines how, in diplomatic, economic and security terms, Australia developed its Indonesia policy under the Liberal-Country Party (L-CP) government. It brings official Australian attitudes towards Indonesia into perspective, as well as the measures employed to accommodate the Government's policy goals. For convenience, Australia's policy reorientation is divided into two broad periods: the first from late 1965 to mid-1968; and the second from mid-1968 to 1970.

The official Australian reaction to events taking place in Indonesia following the coup was initially cautious, reflecting a concern not to exacerbate tensions in Indonesia, as well as an uncertainty as to the direction Indonesia was likely to take. With the end of confrontation, signs emerged that a fundamental change had occurred in the Indonesian political outlook, and that this could pave the way for an improvement in Australia-Indonesia relations. It might also provide new opportunities for regional cooperation.

While the Australian Government throughout the first period displayed sensitivity and realism in its attempts to consolidate goodwill and cooperation -- emphasizing the wider importance of economic and national development in the region -- security factors were of principal consideration. In this situation, while there were greater opportunities for increased contact at the political and commercial levels, the Australian Government's continuing interest and concern in Asia was taken up with military and strategic considerations. As a result, and a major theme in this Chapter, early opportunities to consolidate in the economic and political areas were missed. By 1968, however, the changing strategic situation in the region compelled the Australian Government to revise Australia's security policy, and its attendant

foreign and defence policy priorities. Fundamental to the latter was the evolving relationship with Indonesia and these developments are examined here.

To this point, the gains made in Indonesia's steady recovery seemed to have justified Australia's rather patient diplomacy throughout the two years following the emergence of the 'New Order'. In effect Australia had successfully sown the seeds for a measured consolidation of relations into the 1970s. There remained, however, a tension at the heart of Australia's policy during the second period, and this theme is examined here also. The tension was based on a strong desire to see Indonesia as a stronger Southeast Asian power, but not one that would dominate the region. However, the imperatives of developments in the broader strategic arena -- now casting a shadow over the security afforded Australia by its traditional alliances -- compelled Australia to overcome this ambivalence, and to accelerate its diplomatic processes

The 'New Order' Interregnum

In looking back to the coup, events of such major historical impact and fraught with so much tragedy were bound to generate emotional and divergent interpretations among observers. However, 'the Australian reaction to these events was one of public pleasure and studied governmental discretion'.[1] On 19 October 1965, Paul Hasluck,[2] the Minister for External Affairs, made an impassive and much-delayed statement to the House of Representatives on the situation in Indonesia, setting the tone for subsequent official responses:

> It would be... inappropriate for me to offer conjecture about the future course of events and their possible outcome... These happenings remind us again that Indonesia is still under great internal stress in its search for a form of government and society best suited to its own conditions. We in Australia are gravely disturbed at seeing our nearest neighbour, Indonesia, shaken in this way, for we sincerely hope that Indonesia can be blessed with stability and prosperity and being realistic we know... that any other state of affairs

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1 Gelber, H.G., "Problems in Australian Foreign Policy, January-June 1967", Australian Journal of Politics and History, Vol. 13, No.3, December 1967, p.317.

2 Later, Sir Paul Hasluck.

> could only serve the interests of those who seek to profit from unrest, discontent and turmoil....

Moreover, Hasluck expressed concern at the lack of economic progress in Indonesia and forecast further political and social unrest if this situation was not remedied in the near future. On the nature of past, and the prospects for future relations, and engaging in the valuable exercise of looking beyond immediate problems facing Australian diplomacy, Hasluck looked to the future and outlined a theme to be repeated by government spokesmen many times in the following year:

> While we in Australia are determined in our support of Malaysia against Indonesian confrontation, we have tried to keep open the doorway to such cooperation with our neighbour, and if that one occasion of conflict is removed there are many ways in which we could work together for mutual benefit....[1]

The Opposition's response to Hasluck's careful assessment of the Indonesian situation was in substantial harmony with that of its leader, Arthur Calwell,[2] who endorsed Hasluck's view that Indonesia was severely in need of domestic construction and development. Calwell also shared Hasluck's desire to refrain from 'delivering judgement on those events, fraught though they are with the most important consequences for the whole region, and for Australia'. Moreover, he believed that they were fundamentally internal matters and were, therefore, to be dealt with only by the people of Indonesia.[3]

Despite this, however, the Opposition proposed a sharper perception of events in Indonesia than that which was present in any public government assessments at the time. According to Calwell:

> Instability, economic backwardness and poverty are the things upon which communism thrives and these things will exist while the resources of a nation are channelled into external adventures and while the population is diverted from its domestic problems by the creation of an

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1 Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates (hereafter CPD), House of Representatives (hereafter H.R.), Vol.48, p. 1914, 19 October 1965.

2 The Labor Member for Melbourne (Victoria), and Leader of the Opposition from 7 March 1961 until 8 February 1967 when he was replaced by his deputy, E.G. Whitlam (the Labor Member for Werriwa, New South Wales).

3 CPD, H.R. Vol.48, p.1916, 19 October 1965.

atmosphere of permanent crisis....[1]

Alternatively, while not disagreeing with the central tenet of Hasluck's observations, K.E. Beazley[2] took the Government to task over the Minister's insinuation that Australia would give economic aid to Indonesia if she ceased her policy of confrontation. Beazley insisted that it was a mistake for Australia's Department of External Affairs to hold the view that Australia could divert Indonesian policy by an incentive of monetary grants. The Labor frontbencher emphasized that instead, Australia needed to project a 'genuine concern about the Indonesian people'. He predicted that this concern, fortified by economic aid, would secure good relations. Furthermore, Beazley was compelled to add that Australians:

> underestimate the genuineness of ways of thinking... which are passionate convictions in those areas. When they talk of neo-colonialism and so on, this seems very mistaken from our point of view. We have never really been on the receiving end of colonialism... Where this has been done to other nations they absolutely hate it, and the countries at the giving end of colonialism have never appreciated how the people on the receiving end feel....

The Australian Government thereafter refrained from issuing any further statements in the Parliament, preferring instead a low-key address given by Hasluck to the Victorian branch of the Liberal Speakers Group in mid-November.[3] Although the Minister focused attention on the ideological drift inherent in the coup and the Indonesian people's demonstration against communism, he advocated caution in any judgements as to who would achieve full political power. As the Age had forewarned and a view shared by Hasluck:

> We may feel relieved that Indonesian nationalism has scored a triumph over international communism but we should not assume that any dominant group in Indonesia is content with the situation as it stands. President

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1 Ibid., p.1917.

2 The Labor Member for Freemantle (Western Australia), later Minister for Education in the Whitlam Government. Ibid., pp.2128-2129.

3 Paul Hasluck, "Australia Under Challenge", Address given to a Conference organized by the Liberal Speakers Group of Victoria, 14 November 1965. Current Notes on International Affairs (hereafter CNIA), Vol.36, No.11, November 1965, p.715.

> Sukarno maintains his position as leader of a revolutionary movement, and this is supported by all the adherents of 'guided democracy', including the army....[1]

This cautious approach was echoed by the Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, Major-General Kosasih when he emphatically stated that:

> The most important thing is to let us alone. Do not interfere with our internal problems.... Indonesia has a special attitude to Australia -- you helped us in 1945 and that means very much to us, but do not spoil it....[2]

However, Hasluck was, at this stage, conscious of Indonesia's desire not to be interfered with. When he toured Southeast Asia in late December 1965, the Minister did not include Jakarta in his itinerary, the ostensible reason given, much to the consternation of the Australian press,[3] was that he 'was not in the region'.[4] Essentially it was a reflection of the cautious, non-interference stance taken by the Australian Government on events taking place in post-coup Indonesia.

However, although real and based upon genuine diplomatic and political interest, all this was only part of an increasingly complex picture. Initial Australian reaction to the coup in Indonesia had two characteristics. First, there was a gap between official and public appreciation of the situation, and second, the issue was seen primarily in security terms. Yet, it must be recognised that a number of elements constrained the Australian Government from moving to a more positive attitude towards Indonesia. For a start, it was not clear as to where the authority lay in Jakarta. Nor was it clear the degree of control that was being exercised by President Sukarno as head of State, over domestic policy, and his Foreign Minister, Dr Subandrio, over foreign policy. For this reason, there were no political leaders in clear focus with whom the Australian Government could, with credence, discuss future relations.

Similarly, even if the Australian Government had wished to

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1 The Age, 9 October 1965.

2 The Canberra Times, 3 November 1965.

3 Most of the Australian press called for more positive gestures of interest in the Indonesian nation (See Chapter Four).

4 The Australian, 29 December 1965.

give positive support to the non-communist forces in Indonesia, it was not clear how this could be done. As Canberra could not assume the generals to be pro-Western, there was a possibility they would resist or, alternatively, be politically embarrassed by an expression of Australian support. Finally, it was uncertain whether the new regime taking shape in Indonesia was one with which Australia would wish to have particularly close relations. Apart from the fact that (nominally at least) Indonesia was continuing to 'confront' Malaysia, there was no evidence that a more or less army dominated government would be able to effectively tackle the economic problems that Hasluck indicated had to be overcome before there could be long-term stability in Indonesia. In addition, there was concern in Canberra that the anti-communist campaigns launched in Indonesia were being conducted with an enthusiasm that presaged the coming of an unprecedented element of violence into Indonesian politics.

For all these reasons, the making of policy towards Indonesia during this early period had been a difficult exercise, and one fraught with political dangers. In such circumstances, whatever the tone of Hasluck's public statements, there is evidence to suggest it was clearly understood that the virulent wave of anti-communism which engulfed Indonesia had nothing to do with pro-Westernism and that patient diplomatic spadework was seen to be the key to developing any new relationship.

For the Australian Government, events on 11 March 1966 brought a momentous sequel to the coup with the army, headed by General Suharto, emerging as the most powerful force in the country. In his first official decree, issued in Sukarno's name, Suharto banned the PKI and, in recognition of Sukarno's personal popularity and value as a focus for Indonesia's national sentiment, retained Sukarno as figurehead President. Suharto then embarked on three courses of action during 1966 to consolidate this power: the establishment of special military tribunals (Mahmilub) in order to expose and punish those implicated in the coup; the resuscitation of Indonesia's political institutions; and the 'normalization' of Indonesia's international relations, with particular emphasis on

economic foreign policy.[1]

Nevertheless, while the proven resilience of President Sukarno and Subandrio made Canberra understandably hesitant about negating them as political factors in the Jakarta power game, the critical questions for Canberra in regard to Indonesia were related to the direction that these policies would take under the military, and whether or not it would be able to carry them out. To survive, the Australian Government believed the new regime would have to make a determined assault against internal disorders. As foreign adventures would hinder such action, it seemed likely that confrontation would fade as a physical fact, although for Indonesian domestic reasons it would probably remain as a declared policy. Therefore, while the signs looked hopeful, Indonesia had yet to prove to policy makers in Canberra that it had the strength and the leaders to face the reality of this situation.[2]

Yet, there were still calls by the Australian press for the Australian Government to take an immediate stand, and offer its goodwill to the regime. In its editorial, the Sydney Morning Herald called on the Australian Government to take up the initiative, cease its 'pussy footing' approach towards Indonesia, and to make its intentions clear that, once Indonesia had abandoned its policy of confrontation towards Malaysia, Australia would provide assistance to Indonesia in its massive task of reconstruction.[3] The Australian, although cynical, favoured Hasluck's policy of non-interference:

> Sensibly, Australia has refrained so far from delivering official sermons about the situation in Indonesia since the attempt at a coup last October... This is quite surprising, really, in view of our inability to adopt more detached and objective attitudes to events and affairs elsewhere in Asia. Perhaps our impartiality over Indonesia is the result of the lack of a hard-and-fast American policy towards Indonesia to which we would be bound to some extent, given our willingness to adopt almost without question the policies of our great and

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1 See Pauker, G.J., "Indonesia: The Year of Transition", pp.145-150 for a fuller analysis of this power shift. See also Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER), 1967 Yearbook, pp.213-219, pp.221-225.

2 Harris, personal interview with K.C.O. Shann, Canberra, November 1980.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 14 March 1966.

powerful friends....[1]

The Australian's Southeast Asia correspondent, Peter Hastings, also argued that Hasluck's 'circumspect'[2] refusal to comment on the development in Indonesia's power struggle was correct. Hastings quite correctly believed that those in Australia who called on Hasluck to pressure Indonesia into ending its policy of confrontation in exchange for Australian assistance, displayed a complete lack of understanding of Indonesia's historical sensitivities to outside interference. Moreover, a right-wing, anti-communist Indonesia did not approximate a right-wing Australia, and events immediately following the attempted coup proved such an assumption to be groundless. On the other hand, if Suharto and his followers were pro-Western, which was not yet clear, then nothing could have been more embarrassing to them and their task than to be publicly exhorted to great efforts by the External Affairs Minister of Australia -- a strong critic of confrontation and a member of ANZUS and SEATO.[3]

Against the background of such persuasive views it seemed likely that Hasluck's low-key comments were sensibly designed to, equally, dash extravagant Australian expectations, and to reflect the view that Canberra did not want to commit itself to a position to which it could be held. However, a conclusion to confrontation, later announced in September 1967, and the anti-communism of the Suharto Government continued to be major factors in Australia's search for closer relations with Indonesia. While the ending of confrontation was subsequently stated as the turning point in Australia's policies towards Indonesia, Hasluck's sustained position seemed to indicate that the anti-communism of the Suharto government could well have been at least as important as confrontation in influencing Australian Government policy. For its

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1 The Australian, 15 April 1966.

2 Hasluck, P., "Australia's Foreign Policy", CNIA, Vol.37, No.3, p.132.

3 The Australian, 15 March 1966. Hastings noted General Suharto had indicated strongly 'that we are not leading the revolution to the right' and Nasution, in a post counter-coup statement called for an intensification of confrontation and for extreme vigilance against 'Necolim'[sic] countries, which he portrayed as 'deliberately encircling Indonesia with Imperialist bases'.

part, the Indonesian Government was now intent on restoring a balance to Indonesia's foreign policy. As already noted,[1] this was intended to attract Western aid and investment, as well as to bridge cleavages that had opened up in her bilateral relationships; in particular with Australia.[2] By early June, Australia had indicated it 'warmly welcomed' hopeful signs of a peaceful settlement of the confrontation issue.[3]

In August 1966, Hasluck went to Indonesia for 'broad discussions, extending over a range of matters of common interest in Australia-Indonesia relations as well as regional and international affairs'.[4] However, Hasluck's visit was more than just a diplomatic gesture to a new regime. It was, first and foremost, a positive sign that the government's political experts, believing that a formal end to confrontation was near at hand, had judged that the time was right to explore the nature of future political and economic relations between the Australian and Indonesian governments. Thus, in the context of these recent events and the nature of Australian foreign policy towards Indonesia over the previous year, Hasluck timed his visit carefully, and in line with the prudent course he had followed in the eleven months since the attempted coup.

However, while Hasluck was careful at home to project the purpose of his visit only in broad terms, he was more positive when he settled down to private discussion with the new regime in Jakarta. He had talks with Malik, Suharto, Sukarno and senior economic planners, and discussions centred on Australian promises to provide Indonesia with some essential raw materials (and spare parts to help Indonesia get her industries moving again), Indonesian assurances that it would carry out its obligations to the United Nations and hold an 'act of ascertainment' in West Irian by 1969, and a proposal that Foreign Minister Malik visit

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1 See p.24 and pp.45-50.

2 This was evidenced in a speech to the Indonesian Parliament by Foreign Affairs Minister Malik in early May 1966. See the Age, 7 May 1966.

3 Prime Minister Holt, CNIA, Vol.37, No.6, June 1966, p.375.

4 Ibid., No.8, August 1966, p.506.

Australia.[1] For Hasluck, one of the most important interests of Australian foreign policy at this time was that Indonesia should be 'united, prosperous and peaceful'.[2] Moreover, in the context of political and economic developments of direct concern to Australia, his trip would serve as a proper and useful way to acquaint himself with the new personalities at the head of affairs in Indonesia, as well as with the incumbent politico-economic situation. Confrontation would remain, however, the focal point of discussions, for as far as Canberra was concerned, its solution would open the door to a resumption of normal relations between Australia and Indonesia.

On leaving Jakarta, Hasluck edged away from the government's hitherto cautious position when reflecting on the evolving political context of Australia's relationship with Indonesia. He spoke of the 'good neighbourliness' that had been sustained during even the most difficult phases of the confrontation issue and suggested:

> The disappearance of the sole source of disagreement between the two countries would enable both to look forward to develop the potential which existed for deep and constructive cooperation for mutual benefit....[3]

Some days later, in Australia, Hasluck turned to the economic context. He considered Indonesia had two immediate problems to overcome after it ended confrontation -- Indonesia had to settle its enormous debt difficulties and seek re-entry to the IMF before addressing more basic problems of foreign exchange and inflation. The Minister saw that international aid would be required to assist Indonesia's overall economic development in which Australia could play a moderate and useful role.[4]

By September 1966, Indonesia had paved the way for such a development -- it began negotiations for a peaceful settlement on the confrontation issue, resumed its seat in the United Nations and commenced discussions with creditor nations on the problems of debt rescheduling and economic reconstruction. By late 1966, the

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1 The Age, 11 August 1966.

2 Harris, personal interview with K.C.O. Shann, Canberra, November 1980.

3 CNIA, Vol.37, No.8, August 1966, p.507.

4 The Age, 12 August 1966.

Indonesian Ampera Cabinet had initiated its economic stabilization policy and the internal power struggle had resolved itself sufficiently for Suharto to offer an assurance that Indonesia had dropped her 'arrogant attitude'[1] in international affairs and that in future, Indonesian foreign policy would give highest priority to the creation of regional stability and to cooperation among its Southeast Asian neighbours.[2]

In summary, throughout the period until Hasluck's visit, the main tenet of Australia's policy was to avoid any official comment on developments in Indonesia until a relatively clear picture of the directions of Jakarta's domestic and foreign policies emerged. Once it became apparent that the 'New Order' had taken over and the new direction of Indonesian policies could be ascertained, Australia moved to welcome the change of government and provide diplomatic assistance. However, while the conclusion of confrontation was the official reason given for relations entering a more cooperative phase, an important contributory factor was the ideological rapprochement between the two governments.

What is clear is that while the Australian leadership was constrained by ideological considerations, there was an underlying ambivalence toward Indonesia at this time. This reflected attitudes that not only saw a left-leaning Indonesia as a threat but also saw that support from Indonesia could be of considerable value in the impending struggle against Chinese communism. Further, there is little doubt that both the Indonesian (Suharto and Malik) and Australian (Holt and Hasluck) leaderships acted rationally, each fully understanding the situation that existed between the two countries. In this way, the potential for accommodation was greatly broadened. The fact, decried by some, but applauded by others, that Hasluck took things steadily, taking the opportunity and the time to become acquainted with all the subtleties of the Indonesian situation, was an important, perhaps indispensable basis for subsequent detente. In this new situation, where the sources of strain and disagreement appeared to have been eliminated, there would be greater opportunities for increased

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1 Government Report to the People, Department of Information, Jakarta, Special Issue, 013/1967, pp.18-19.

2 FEER, 1967 Yearbook, pp.218-219.

contact at the unofficial, as well as the official and commercial levels. However, Hasluck's identification of Australia's goals and the methods through which they could be achieved was one thing; achieving them was another.

Early Initiatives

In January 1967, Hasluck again visited Indonesia, with three main objectives in mind -- first, to open the new Australian Embassy (the official reason given for the trip), second, to offer economic assistance and, third, to hold discussions on trade opportunities between the two countries.[1] While it was widely believed that these discussions would be guarded, avoiding the impression that Australia was appearing to be intervening in internal Indonesian politics,[2] the composition of the official party[3] indicated the Australian Government's wish to generate trade and cooperation between the two countries.[4] The direction Australia's assistance took, as well as its timing, however, depended on Hasluck's assessments at the time of the likely course of Indonesia's internal political situation. Two other factors, though, were to influence Australia and to soften its rigid policy that 'Indonesia had to be seen to be doing right in Australia's eyes before any worthwhile aid will be given'.[5]

The first related to the role of Japan. It had maintained a

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1 CNIA, Vol.38, No. 1, January 1967, pp.41-42.

2 The Australian, 25 January 1967. See also The Age, 25 January 1967 and The Mercury, 19 January 1967.

3 The official party comprised the Commissioner of the Export Payments Insurance Corporation (G.A. Hawley), the Chairman of the Export Development Council (C.G. McGrath), the Deputy Secretary of the Department of External Affairs and former Ambassador to Indonesia (Sir Lawrence McIntyre), the Head of the Export Division of the Trade Department (A.Paltridge), the Director-General of Works (G.B. Maunder) and the Head of the External Aid Branch of the Department of External Affairs (L.W. Engledon). Discussions were held with Foreign Minister Malik, Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX (The Presidium Minister for Economic and Financial Affairs), Mr F. Seda (Minister for Finance), Major-General Ashari Danudirdjo (Minister of Trade) and other senior officials and advisers to the Government.

4 The Advertiser, 16 January 1967.

5 The Australian, 25 January 1967.

close liaison with Indonesia during the period when Sukarno's influence began to wane, and continued to contribute credit and aid above and beyond the large amount already owed to it by Indonesia.[1] The second factor was related to trade, and the realization that the Australian-Indonesian Trade Agreement was due for renewal in May 1967. In this regard, however, Hasluck's mission was unable to consider substantial changes to the Agreement until Indonesia's Western creditors had met in Amsterdam in February 1967, and the reforms of Indonesia's economic regulations and organizations had been completed.[2]

For her part, Indonesia's early actions continued to display a high degree of ambivalence. On the economic level, some weeks before Hasluck's visit, Indonesia opened the way to increased activity by removing the hostile policies for foreign investments which had marked the latter stages of the Sukarno era. Further, a few days before the party's arrival, the Indonesian Government made the 'appropriate symbolic gesture'[3] of restoring, to Australian control, the pharmaceutical company, NASPRO, which had been taken over by the Indonesian government in April 1965. On the cultural level, an Australian delegation, comprising sixty-eight members, spent two weeks attending an Indonesian language seminar in Bandung. Yet, these concessions were rendered somewhat superficial when, on another level, the Indonesian armed forces newspaper, Angkatan Bersendjata, published an editorial questioning Australia's participation in military pacts and revealed nagging, if unfounded, doubts about Australia's ambitions towards West New Guinea. Underlying historical sentiments were particularly evident when it concluded:

> We hope from now on that Australia is able to think in terms of Asia and the Pacific, so that it does not fall into the trap of becoming the South Africa or the Ian Smith Rhodesia[sic] of Asia....[4]

In what proved to be an early indication of the relationship

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1 van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, p.165.

2 Creighton Burns offers an incisive analysis of these pressures on Australia's position regarding Indonesia in The Canberra Times, 27 January 1967.

3 The Canberra Times, 27 January 1967.

4 Ibid.

between, and conflicting foreign policy orientations of, the Foreign Ministry and the military, Foreign Minister Malik was quick to balance these statements. Speaking at the opening of the new Australian Embassy, Malik put the view that his country intended to 'safeguard' its good relations and cooperation with Australia, and maintained that this would 'guarantee security and peace in the Pacific region'.[1]

While the basic aim of Hasluck's trip had been, given a favourable outlook, centred on exploring the prospects for trade, as well as the extension of more civil aid to Indonesia, the chief public product of his visit was a brief comment, made in Jakarta prior to his return,[2] which reflected his belief that the trip may not have been as productive as had been hoped. But given the constraints of the domestic situation in Indonesia, a closer examination of Hasluck's Jakarta statement reveals a number of tacks, all directed toward contributing to Indonesia's clearly indicated desire for economic rejuvenation. First, Hasluck made the promise that Australia would promote Indonesia's interests at the Amsterdam meeting of Indonesia's creditor nations in February 1967. This meant urging the rescheduling of Indonesia's debts, due to fall in 1968 and 1969 -- a development regarded as essential by the Indonesians as the December 1966 meeting in Paris rescheduled only the debts and interest due in 1967 (to be paid in the period 1971-1978). Integral here was the need for Australia to try to induce as many nations as possible to extend new credits to Indonesia. However, this would necessarily demand a sizeable Australian contribution over and above the $500 000 grant Hasluck made during his August trip. Second, in considering future economic assistance, Hasluck indicated that Australia would have to concentrate on projects to improve communications (specifically, closer shipping and air links to induce trade) and increase food production. These areas were of particular concern to the Indonesians, as they related to their stabilization programme, and were key areas where they felt Australia could contribute.

Clearly, ventures such as those indicated by Hasluck, raised a number of complex questions and Hasluck's statement in Jakarta did

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1 The Canberra Times, 27 January, 1967.

2 CNIA, Vol.38, No.1, January 1967, pp.41-42.

little to answer them or inform Australia as to their substance. However, behind Hasluck's visit and his incomplete account of it, loomed one overpowering consideration. As the Advertiser editorialized:

> Australia ... should strain every effort to help Indonesia back on her feet. It is clearly in this country's interests to have a contented people in our Near North... How best to ensure internal stability is one of the most acute problems facing the Suharto regime....[1]

That Australia stood to gain relatively more from a strong, prosperous Indonesia than did other nations, was re-enforced by the Canberra Times when it was argued:

> A strong Indonesia with its economic problems under control means stability in the region. We lived alongside another kind of Indonesia for long enough to learn at first hand the dangers of instability there....[2]

Clearly, this publicly expressed those arguments, embraced privately by Hasluck,[3] which placed rehabilitation on a level of self-interest. However, altruistic considerations did emerge as interlocking with this self-interest. The welfare of the Indonesian people, it was argued, was paramount. As the Canberra Times indicated, 'It is about time they began to taste some of the undeveloped riches of their own country'.[4]

Hasluck did not further release any information relating to his trip until he had been back in Australia for a number of days. In a three-page statement (in preference to a press conference) he emphasized two points. First, that the economic rehabilitation and development of Indonesia was most important to the whole of the Southeast Asian region. Second, that in considering economic assistance to Indonesia, the Australian Government would need to place a high priority on the importance of improving communications, particularly in the context of increasing

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1 The Advertiser, 16 January 1967.

2 The Canberra Times, 1 February 1967.

3 Harris, personal interview with K.C.O. Shann, Canberra, November 1980.

4 The Canberra Times, 1 February 1967.

Indonesia's exports and food production.[1]

If there had been any doubts as to Hasluck's motives, they were dispelled when he made a statement to the House of Representatives on 28 February, 1967 in which he spent considerable time analysing the Indonesian situation for the Members. In regard to the domestic political environment, Hasluck identified what he believed was a transitional process -- a move 'from the former experiment with guided democracy to a form of representative government more in line with the popular will and... provisions of the 1945 Constitution'. Recognizing that problems lay ahead for Indonesia in the political sphere, Hasluck reinforced the Indonesian view that Indonesia's internal political arrangements were its own concern, and expressed sympathy with the Indonesian Government's objective to strengthen the role of national representative institutions in the formulation of government policy. On the economic front, Hasluck recognized that Indonesia was appoaching its enormous economic problems in a realistic way[2] and signalled Australia's intention to play a supportive role both through direct assistance and in international forums such as IGGI.[3]

Although he stressed to the House of Representatives that the Australian Government had 'a human sympathy for the people of their closest neighbour', it could be argued that Hasluck's intention to support Indonesia, both generally, and specifically at the IGGI meeting, stemmed from his perception of the role that economic development would play in creating the foundations of political stability in Southeast Asia. It also cannot be overlooked that Hasluck's position of support could also have stemmed from Australian concern over persistent reports that the British intended to withdraw from Singapore and Malaysia. While he considered (six months later) that such a withdrawal would take time, the problem facing Australia was not one of 'developing its

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1 Other issues discussed by Hasluck and Malik centred on the first phase of the demarcation of the border between West New Guinea (Irian Barat), and the Territory of Papua New Guinea, and future cultural exchanges between the two countries. The Age, 1 February 1967.

2 Hasluck, P., "Statement of Australian Foreign Policy," CNIA, Vol.38, No.2, February 1967, p.58.

3 CNIA, Vol.38, 1967, p.42.

own distinctive role'.[1] Rather, Hasluckian 'realism' would demand an alternative form of collective security.

Within a year the situation was to reach a critical point, with Britain announcing on 16 January 1968 that it did intend withdrawing from the region by the early 1970s. Hasluck was subsequently compelled to inform the House of Representatives of the government's thinking, in particular that while:

> I do not think that at this time we can talk realistically of one big defence pact covering all the countries of the region [,] we can readily envisage... a variety of arrangements... all of which will contribute to regional security... They can range from the exchange of security information to actual military co-operation... developing economic and diplomatic co-operation and such things as joint technical projects which bring added strength to the participating countries. We in Australia are working to make the best use of all such opportunities....[2]

Meanwhile, and in an earlier expression of this policy, Australia became involved in structuring solutions to Indonesia's economic problems. Although Australia was not one of the creditor nations which met to negotiate with Indonesia over the problems associated with the rescheduling of her debts, it did send official observers to the first Tokyo meeting. It was then that Australia became an active member of the subsequently formed IGGI, established by Western creditor nations and Japan to find and coordinate large-scale aid to Indonesia. Over the next three years at IGGI meetings of member countries, Australian diplomats played an important role, and 'lent the most sympathetic support to the Indonesian delegations in their quest for sufficient aid to support first stabilization, and since 1968, rehabilitation and development of the Indonesian economy'.[3] Such aid grew from an initial emergency credit of US$170 million in 1966 to US$350 million and US$600 million in 1968 and 1970, respectively. A substantial proportion of this aid, known as 'BE' (Export Bonus) credits was used to support Indonesia's balance of payments position, enabling it to maintain an adequate level of export earnings in relation to its import

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.56, p.208, 17 August 1967.

2 Ibid., Vol.58, p.453, 26 March 1968.

3 Arndt, H.W., "Australian Economic Aid to Indonesia", Australian Outlook, Vol.24, No.2, August 1970, pp.129-130.

needs.[1]

The role of the Australian Export Development Council (EDC) in this development cannot be overestimated. In early April 1967, the EDC -- chaired by C.G. McGrath, one of Hasluck's party during his January trip -- released a report on the Indonesian economy, focusing on the role of the private sector as a viable second source of Australian aid to underdeveloped countries. Generally, the report alluded to the constructive and profitable role Australian exporters and investors could play in the economic development of Southeast Asia.

The report at length, optimistically predicted the Indonesian economy's recovery capacity, stressing its new and extremely liberal attitude towards foreign capital. It also made the important point that, as an earnest show of good faith, the Indonesian Government had decided to return all investments seized by the previous administration. Now, foreign companies were being presented with the opportunity to enjoy 'taxation holidays, duty exemption for agreed periods, guaranteed transfer of profits after tax and repatriation of capital after expiration of the tax-free period.'[2] In this manner, investment in Indonesia, through exports or the establishment of factories, was not only being promoted as 'good business', but was also considered to be politically advantageous.

While such political and economic arguments were being orchestrated with precision, there were still, nevertheless, a number of unknown factors for Australia to consider:

(1) the future role of the army in Indonesian society;
(2) the prospects for a democratically held election (at that time predicted to be held in 1968);
(3) Sukarno's role;
(4) the durability of the communists in Indonesia; and
(5) the scope of the economic problems facing Indonesia.

However, Hasluck, while recognizing that the tasks and tensions confronting Indonesia were not matters to be overcome in only a few years, held firmly to the view that economic development would lead to stability in Indonesia -- an important Australian national

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1 Ibid., p.130.

2 The Australian, 3 April 1967.

interest. For the remainder of 1967, apart from a problem arising from an incident on the Papua New Guinea/Irian Jaya border,[1] the issue that figured prominently in the relationship centred on Australian investment in Indonesia.

Call for Australian Investment

As we noted earlier,[2] in October 1966, the Indonesian leadership embarked on a stabilization plan to steady the Indonesian economy. While it contained some hard-hitting measures,[3] criticism was mounting over business delays caused by the government's tight money policies, particularly in the import sector. Yet, it seemed that the Indonesian economy had, momentarily, staved off collapse. Efforts to obtain the rescheduling of debts had achieved encouraging results with new credits being ordered. Further, while production of food crops in 1966 was below the target set by the government, it was an improvement on 1965, with an additional production rise in 1967 as a consequence of a renewed emphasis on planning.[4]

Armed with such positive developments, the noted Indonesian economist, Professor Emil Salim,[5] visited Australia to have discussions with businessmen and Australian officials, and attended the Australia-Indonesia Association (NSW) three-day summer school in April 1967 as a guest of the Australian Government. As principal speaker, he outlined Indonesia's rehabilitation programme, isolated the problems his government needed to tackle, and urged greater Australian investment, both governmental and

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1 See Chapter Three.

2 See pp.27-32.

3 The Bulletin, 29 April 1967. These measures included the following principles: balanced budgets -- through intensified tax collection and by containing government spending; foreign exchange reform to assist an improvement in the trade balance and government revenues; placing limits on bank credit; ending of subsidies and restrictive controls on State enterprises, in order to improve their performance; creation of a favourable climate for foreign investment through the Foreign Investment Law.

4 See Chapter One.

5 A lecturer on economics at the University of Indonesia, a member of Parliament and a member of Suharto's economic advisory committee.

private, as well as investment from other international sources. The thrust of his arguments centred on his belief that there was no longer any tangible reason why trade between Indonesia and Australia should not vastly increase.

In urging increased trade, investment and the proffering of loans to help Indonesia's economic reconstruction he argued that with confrontation finished, Australian finances for defence could be more productively directed to other areas; in particular, Indonesia. Salim was anxious to impress upon his audience of predominantly Australian businessmen the sincerity of the new leadership in Jakarta, and concluded with his assessment that:

> This is the first cabinet we have ever had that puts economic planning first - before politics, ... under the old regime, the intellectuals and planners just didn't count ... we are committed to this new government because it must succeed. If it does not there will be no other chance for us again....[1]

However, Australian businessmen were prepared to adopt a wait-and-see attitude about investing in Indonesia and this was quickly recognized and duly acknowledged by the Indonesian economic adviser the following month. It was Salim's understanding that, although Australians had indicated to him that they were willing to invest 'big sums in quick-yielding projects' in Indonesia, they wanted further assurances that their interests would be safe from government interference.

Professor Salim's prime mission was to help consolidate support within the Australian Government for a contribution toward Indonesia's US$200 million balance of payments gap. During his two week visit to Australia he achieved a great deal, impressing officials with 'the realism and determination of the 'New Order' to lift the Indonesian economy out of the corrupt inflationary mire which was Sukarno's heritage to his people'.[2] Salim amplified the Indonesian Government's emphasis on decontrol and debureaucratisation in major economic policy-making areas, while stressing that the Indonesian government had begun to move to exorcise inefficiency and corruption by dismantling the huge structure of regulations under the Old Order.

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[1] The Indonesian Herald, 24 April 1967.

[2] The Bulletin, 20 May 1967.

Although it was clear that there was a long way to go before economic stability could be claimed,[1] the country's stabilization programme was showing some signs of success in the first half of 1967.[2] However, Indonesia's path to recovery was not without dilemmas. In the words of Salim, 'We have had to undergo painful and quick surgery with very rusty tools'; factories were seizing up; trade was being affected by an intense credit squeeze; a suspension of work on building projects initiated by the Old Order had thrown the building industry into a deep slump and freer trade had flooded the local market with imports which heavily undercut domestic products.[3] Textiles was a case in point, with certain Jakarta factories virtually closing down due to their inability to compete with prices of Hong Kong and Taiwanese cloth. It was also suggested that rice imports were discouraging local production (although the harvest in the first half of 1967 was an exceedingly good one).[4]

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1 The problems still facing Indonesia included:
(a). Indonesia's raising of its foreign exchange export rate from 100 rupiahs to 110 rupiahs to the US Dollar during the first week of May (reported by Indonesian exporters). The move coincided with a steep rise in the blackmarket rate for the US dollar, standing out at 140 rupiahs as against 125 rupiahs in late April.
(b). The increase was understood to be due to a dwindling of the country's foreign exchange reserve, and of the increasing number of Chinese nationals buying up hard currency as they prepared to leave for their homeland following a wave of anti-Chinese feeling in Indonesia.
(c). Export markets were reported idle following the increase in the bonus export rate (which determined the proportion of foreign exchange earnings which exporters we required to hand to the government).
(d). Indonesian producers were complaining that imported goods were flowing into the country freely, and undercutting local producers in such products as textiles and canned foods.

2 The rupiah had firmed up in relation to the US dollar; inflation had been cut back from between 40 and 50 percent to four percent during the first quarter (measured on a monthly rather than yearly basis). As Peter Samuel wrote 'with government enterprises well on the way to covering costs and a general austerity programme being carried out, the huge inflation-producing government deficit is diminishing' (the Bulletin, 20 May 1967).

3 The Bulletin, 20 May 1967.

4 See Denis Warner in The Courier-Mail, 12 June 1967.

Pointing out such problems, the Indonesian economist, Dr Panglaykim, argued that the Indonesian government 'was taking its free-market philosophy too seriously'.[1] His philosophy was simple: cheap imports were a valuable factor in any kind of anti-inflationary effort, but a country in Indonesia's position should not spend scarce foreign exchange on products which could be coming from existing Indonesian factories which were otherwise lying idle. In practical terms, he saw value in bans being put on the import of certain lines of textiles in order to get factories going again.

Underlying these views was a perception that private business would be the key to Indonesia's recovery, and the Pacific Industrial Council's (in Sydney) decision to send a survey team to Indonesia (to examine the prospects for private enterprise in Indonesia, and draw up a list of viable projects) was described by Dr Panglaykim as being a major 'breakthrough'. He also felt that if companies formed consortiums (hence, spreading the risks and getting things moving quickly) then the conservative approach taken by Australian businessmen could be overcome.[2]

What of Australia's role? The aid offered by Australia was to be given under the BE system, enabling private businessmen and state instrumentalities to bid by auction for import certificates for goods on an essential imports list. However, compared to aid granted by other countries -- US $65 million (conditional on other countries combining to make the total up to US$200 million); Japan - US$60 million; and West Germany - US$13 million -- Australia's AUD$5 million contribution was the bare minimum we could respectably offer, although it was a no-strings grant compared to the other contributions which took the form of long-term loans at low interest rates.

In early August 1967, there was a meeting of the Pacific-Indonesian Business Association in Jakarta at which private business leaders from nine nations surveyed the Indonesian economy and began planning possible investment, trade and technical training schemes. In a preamble to this conference, a function was

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1 The Bulletin, 20 May 1967, Dr Panglaykim also expressed these sentiments in an interview. Harris, personal interview with Dr Panglaykim, Jakarta, November 1981.

2 Ibid.

held in Australia during the previous week for the Australian delegation (made up of commercial and industrial executives). The major speaker at this function was the Indonesian Ambassador Kosasih, who stressed the significance of the talks for economic development in Indonesia. Moreover, he considered not only would Australia's participation in the talks be a turning point in economic relations between the two countries, but also that the two countries had the potential to develop a permanent economic bond.[1]

There is little doubt that the size and diversity of the Australian delegation -- the sixty private businessmen from 40 firms was the largest national group at the conference, and the biggest private business delegation ever to represent Australia overseas[2] -- was a testimony to Australia's interest in Indonesia's economic development. However, the question remained as to how far that interest would be carried into positive action. The conservatism of Australian businessmen had always been in evidence in Southeast Asia, and prior to the conference, there had not been any significant increase in Australia's trade with Indonesia.[3]

The conference[4] was opened on Thursday 3 August 1967 and was attended by 150 foreign businessmen from 14 countries. One of its stated aims (important in the light of Indonesia's hostile attitude to foreign enterprise under Sukarno) was to bring foreign and Indonesian businessmen together in an attempt to promote understanding and more direct contact. In this context, Australia was singled out by the Conference Chairman, Julius Tahija, a leading Indonesian businessman, as being the country from which

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1 The Australian, 28 February 1967.

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 2 August 1967.

3 See Appendices A and B.

4 The seeds for such a conference were sown in Sydney in April 1967 at the first Pacific Industrial Conference by an Australian financier, the chairman and managing director of the Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (Sydney) H.D. Marks. He proposed an 'international task force' to help restore the Indonesian economy, claiming that the proposal expressed the feelings held by those at the April conference. Events were to bear him out, with the America's Stanford Research Institute agreeing to sponsor the meeting in Jakarta in August (the Sydney Morning Herald , 2 August 1967).

Indonesia could learn -- in particular, the manner in which Australia had 'balanced foreign and domestic interests'.[1] While Australian delegates were issued with comprehensive dossiers on Indonesia's new economic regulations, and assistance was given to ensure that they gained the necessary information and access to important contacts -- including Indonesian Government officials and businessmen -- caution prevailed throughout the Conference. The legacy of hostility which marked Indonesian attitudes to foreign investments under the Old Order (and still lingered in some quarters), together with the knowledge that Indonesia was still saddled with inefficient administrative mechanisms, only served to constrain any degree of enthusiasm over any future business links with Indonesia.[2]

For its part, the Australian Government remained at a distance. It continued to offer verbal encouragement and was a strong advocate of generous economic aid for Indonesia, yet it seemed to do less than it was able, to feed capital and technical assistance into the barren Indonesian economy. This remained the scenario well into 1968, despite the fact that Hasluck remained 'a powerful protagonist of the sensible thesis that continuing economic stagnation in Indonesia is more likely than anything else to undermine the new regime there, or drive it towards

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 August 1967.

2 Within days of this conference, the Indonesian diplomat, politician and journalist, Mr Soedjatmoko (Indonesia's chief representative at the United Nations in 1966) was in Melbourne to deliver the Dyason Memorial Lectures (7 and 9 August 1967). He emphasized that (i) Indonesia was not interested in entering into a defence pact with anyone, including Australia. (ii) Australia and Indonesia could enter into closer economic ties, and called for Australian participation in middle-size manufacturing industries in Indonesia. (iii) Australia's high level of economic development made the development of a sense of affinity and equality difficult, although not impossible. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 10 September 1967). Following his series of lectures, Soedjatmoko put forward a two point plan, in Canberra, for improving relations between Australia and Indonesia. That (i) contact between Australia and Indonesia be more on a person-to-person basis, particularly in the cultural and tourism arenas. (ii) the two countries on a government-to-government basis move to consolidate relations, which were 'very stable - very friendly' (The Sydney Morning Herald, 12 September 1967).

authoritarianism'.[1]

To sum up, it seems clear that Indonesia had commenced the long road back to national solvency and eventual development, despite its still insecure political basis. With the Indonesian Government shaping its 1967/89 Budget to confront inflation and bureaucratic anomalies, legislating to encourage public and private foreign investment and taking steps to suppress corruption and smuggling, it was actively trying to create an atmosphere of confidence and reinstate itself as a member of the international community.

It was becoming evident at the end of 1967 that Indonesia was more concerned with internal rather than external security, as evidenced by the Indonesian Government's emphasis on resurrecting the economy. Its foreign policy was deliberately low-key, and its agreement to join Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore in ASEAN on 8 August 1967 reflected a more accommodating attitude towards its neighbours.

Yet, such changes in Jakarta -- from a provocative stand in external policies to a policy platform designed to invite the widest possible range of friendly relations, which in effect amounted to a friends-and-neighbour's policy (something Australia had been urging on Indonesia for years) -- posed problems for Canberra's policy makers. When Indonesia's foreign policy reflected strong ideological overtones -- with Australia among the 'old established forces' (in need of overturning) -- Canberra's military and political links with the two Western powers in Southeast Asia (America and Great Britain) involved Australia in the major issues as Jakarta saw them. In addition, Australia and Indonesia had a special relationship based on Australia's early support of Indonesian independence, pre-occupation with Papua New Guinea and the fact that, as neighbours, our general differences on regional security were also daily and concrete.

However, during the first two years of the 'New Order', Indonesia's preoccupation with economic development (particularly in the extent to which developed countries would be prepared to assist financially) and a more accommodating foreign policy, placed an unfamiliar strain on Australia's relations with her closest

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[1] Creighton Burns, the Age, 17 August 1967.

neighbour, with Australia's special relationship tending to waste away as it fell outside Jakarta's current interests. First, Australia was not invited to join ASEAN - Jakarta felt perhaps that two SEATO nations (Thailand and the Philippines) and two with British links (Malaysia and Singapore) were enough strange bedfellows for one organization. Second, as a more developed country, Australia also stood apart. At the same time our contribution in dollar terms was barely respectable. The fact was that creditor nations, including some with a considerably more remote interest than Australia in Indonesian stability (for example, Great Britain), had already met the target of AUD$200 million balance of payments assistance for the year 1967.

Clearly, Canberra withheld financial support for too long. While it was not Indonesia's view that Australia did this because it disapproved of the new regime in Jakarta or because it doubted the intentions of the Suharto government, the failure to act decisively suggested to them that, 'the Australian Government was not in a frame of mind to appreciate the importance of Indonesia's financial difficulties'.[1] The impression in Indonesia, about Australia's caution and parsimony, was one of puzzlement. The mood was also cynical. After Australia had preached to the Indonesians for so long about the need to concentrate on the economy, we now displayed a reservation in showing our appreciation. Hitherto, it had emerged that on the commercial level, the PIBA conference tentatively drew out fresh Australian business interest in Indonesia. This was appreciated to be necessary in the long-term, and, properly enough, was based on practical commercial considerations.

The Changing Environment

From 1968, however, the profound changes taking place in the wider international arena were to have implications for the Southeast Asian region as a whole, and for Australia-Indonesia relations in particular. Reliance on the external power of Great Britain and the United States of America had been a distinguishing feature of the foreign policies of a number of countries in the Southeast Asian region, including Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia and Australia. The announcements in the first

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[1] Bruce Grant, the Age, 14 August 1967.

half of 1968 that the British would withdraw their forces east of Suez by 1971, and that the USA would wind down its war-effort in Vietnam after 1968, served to shake confidence of these countries in their powerful allies, and to stimulate a fundamental reassessment of regional security among them. These changes were to affect not only Australia's attitude and policies towards the region, but also relations between Australia and Indonesia. Indeed, while the bilateral relationship was still confounded by basic differences in foreign policy between the two countries from 1968 onwards, the reorientation of Australian foreign policy in the wake of these changes (from 1969) played a significant part in removing some principal differences between Australian and Indonesian approaches to regional security. In view of Australian attitudes and policies towards the region, historically, these issues could have provided the basis for the development of a more complex bilateral relationship than otherwise did eventuate.[1]

For years, the basis of Australian foreign policy had rested solidly on the ANZUS Treaty.[2] But the relationship with the Americans went deeper than this:

> Accord was reflected not only in the close cooperation between the two countries but in the degree to which... they had arrived by independent routes at the same estimation of the Asian situation. This concurrence was apparent at the regular ANZUS and SEATO meetings. There was virtually no divergence between Australian and American interpretations of Asian developments, of the need to stem the communist tide, resist aggression, promote security and stability in the area, and provide the opportunity for Asian countries, many of them newly independent, to decide their own destinies....[3]

For Australia, security and stability was reinforced by a division of responsibility within Asia between the two allies. While Great Britain was involved in maintaining stability in the Malaysian

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1 The two major issues examined here related to Australia's continued presence in Malaysia/Singapore and, in Chapter Three, the 'Act of Free Choice' in West New Guinea.

2 The Treaty was between Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America, and was signed 1 September 1951. It was ratified in April 1952.

3 Greenwood, G., "The Political Debate in Australia", in Greenwood, G. and Harper, N., (eds.), Australia in World Affairs 1966-70 Cheshire, Melbourne, 1974, pp.48-49.

region, the USA provided security in East Asia, in particular, Vietnam. Australia, with interests encompassing the whole arena, was involved in both and maintained forces in defence of the former, while, at the same time, committing troops to the latter.

However, the British and American decisions seemed to negate the whole philosophy underlying this participation. In particular, with the change in the USA's defence strategy under the Nixon Doctrine (1969) -- which espoused a programme of greater self-reliance in defence preparedness for countries under America's protection -- Australia came to the realization that it could no longer afford to predicate its security entirely on great power guarantees and there could be observed a hesitant but perceptible move on Australia's part towards an emphasis on security based more on regional cooperation.

In essence, by the late 1960s, Australia was facing, and compelled to make adjustments to:

> basic changes in the pattern of great power relationships. The breakdown of the old 'bipolar' system was already far advanced by the mid-1960s... The Nixon administration positively encouraged the idea of a new multi-power balance and expectations along these lines had crystallized much further. Perhaps most decisive, the issues had changed. International politics no longer revolved around the cold war conflict, but was increasingly perceived in terms of multiple cleavages and great-power rivalries limited by an awareness of common interests... An 'era of confrontation' was indeed giving place to an 'era of negotiation' or, more prosaically, an era of hard bargaining and diplomatic manoeuvre. In this context, Vietnam appeared less and less the decisive battleground for the future of Asia, more and more an anomalous prolongation of the cold war.[1]

The British and American Military Withdrawals

The British decision to phase out its military presence in Singapore and surrender its leases on bases there cast a shadow over the rationale and future of Australia's military presence in the area. As the Prime Minister, J.G. Gorton, said, it would bring about 'drastic alterations of previously understood arrangements as to the continuing availability of British forces in the region'.[2]

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[1] Richardson, J.L., "Australian Strategic and Defence Policies", in Greenwood and Harper, Australia in World Affairs 1966-1970, pp. 259-60.

[2] CNIA, Vol. 39, No. 1, January 1968, p. 30.

Yet, this did not unduly trouble Gorton because, in the debate that followed, both in the public and parliamentary forums, and driven by strong personal feelings,[1] he favoured a withdrawal of all Australian forces from the region -- Malaysia and Singapore, as well as Vietnam. Moreover, Gorton's belief was that national and regional security would be better served by directing resources towards industrializing Australia rather than solely towards defence.[2] However, Gorton did not always hold this view, nor did some of his colleagues. Hasluck and Defence Minister Fairhall, for instance, argued that Australia should maintain its active role in the region, in military and economic terms. The assumption here was that Australia's security interests would be consolidated both through the establishment of strong economic links with Southeast Asia and through a continuing military presence in Malaysia and Singapore.[3]

Notwithstanding Gorton's view, it became evident in early 1968 that broader political pressures[4] would prevail and that the Australian Government intended to maintain the commitment of

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1 Harris, Interview with Mr J.G. Gorton, Canberra, April 1985.

2 Trengrove, A., John Grey Gorton: an informal biography, Cassell, Melbourne, 1969, p. 203.

3 It needs to be stressed however that Gorton took some time to move away from his January (1968) statement. By June 1969, at the Five-Power Defence meeting held in Canberra, Gorton placed emphasis on 'a continuing visible presence' of Australian forces. (Gorton, 'Opening Address' in CNIA, Vol.40, No.6, June 1969, p.302). In August 1969, in response to a Question in the House, Gorton confirmed that it had been expressed as early as February 1969 that these forces would not be used to deal with internal problems, and could 'be used against external aggression only with the prior consent and approval of the Australian Government'. (CPD, HR., Vol.64, p.254, 14 August 1969).

4 Externally, the Singapore and Malaysian Governments were urging Australia to retain its presence as a focal point for new five power arrangements, while the United States wanted Australia to participate in the kind of regional arrangement which it was seeking to promote in Asia. Internally, the government came under pressure from those who favoured 'forward defence, including the electorally powerful Democratic Labor Party. Moreover, opinion polls at the time indicated that a continued Australian commitment to Malaysia/Singapore had substantial majority support (see Richardson, "Australian Strategic and Defence Policies", pp.246-247). These themes are developed later in this chapter.

Australian forces to Malaysia and Singapore after the British withdrawal had been effected in 1971. In fact, Gorton not only considered that Malaysia and Singapore displayed a strong preference for a continued Australian commitment, but that there was a need for Australia to 'seek as far as possible according to our own resources, to fall in with them'.[1] However, the Australian Government were mindful to reassure the regional powers that it was not its intention to assume Britain's role, or her commitments in Malaysia and Singapore. Moreover, while Defence Minister Fairhall noted that were Australia to maintain a military presence in the area, he stressed that it would 'be in the context of a total cooperative effort, involving all five powers [Britain, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore and Australia]', and that Australia's participation would not be directed 'against anybody... we would be looking to the day when truly regional cooperative arrangements would extend beyond Malaysia and Singapore'.[2] Nevertheless, while both Fairhall and Hasluck attended the Five Power talks in Kuala Lumpur in June 1968, no decision was reached on the question of a framework for the defence of Malaysia and Singapore after the British withdrawal.[3]

By the end of 1968, the government was coming under increasingly heavy criticism, particularly from the Opposition, for delaying a decision on Australia's role after 1971.[4] While public opinion was increasingly in favour of a continued commitment,[5] it was announced in 19 November 1968 that Australia would only retain military forces in Malaysia and Singapore until the end of 1971, after which time it would seek joint security associations with other nations in the area.

However, the impression had now emerged that Australia's hesitation was related to the direction of American policies in the

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 14 February 1968.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.58, p.1075, 2 May 1968.

3 Richardson, "Australian Strategic and Defence Policies", p.245.

4 The Age, 20 November 1968.

5 See, for example, the Sydney Morning Herald, 15 February 1968; 3 May 1968; 8 June 1969; 22 November 1969. Cited in Richardson, "Australian Strategic and Defence Policies", p.245.

region following Johnson's decision on 31 March to de-escalate the USA's role in Vietnam. As Fairhall admitted to the House of Representatives:

> a clarification by the United States of its attitudes towards the end of the war in Vietnam, the likely peace which will follow and the conditions which will prevail throughout South East Asia as the Western Pacific ... are matters which are vital to any consideration of what we might be able to do and what we should do in the South Pacific area.[1]

Indeed, Australia's support of America's role and policy in Vietnam was based on the notion that Australia, essentially for its own security needs, had to be seen to be 'a willing ally'.[2] However, this notion was undermined not only by Johnson's announcement but also by his indication that he would not seek the presidency in the forthcoming elections. As Whitlam enthusiastically noted in the House of Representatives in late 1968, the announcement was tantamount to an admission of a failure of American objectives in Vietnam:

> I sought this indulgence because this is a momentous occasion ... The whole structure of Liberal policies and Liberal propaganda, not just about this but Australia's role in this region and beyond, has crashed ... The so-called 'realists' were in fact living in a world of fantasy which ignored basic truths about the nature of the war itself, the limitations of military power and the real nature of the communist challenge.[3]

The Australian Government was now faced with two options -- follow the direction taken by the USA, or pursue an independent policy. With Gorton proclaiming that it was 'groundless' to argue that the Americans were withdrawing from Southeast Asia into another period of isolationism,[4] and External Affairs Minister Hasluck arguing that an unconditional bombing halt would be 'an act of folly,[5] there was a clear failure on the part of these Australian leaders to anticipate the pace of change in American policy. This was to

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1 CDP, H.R., Vol.61, p.2953, 19 November 1968.

2 Millar, T.B., Australia in Peace and War, p.216.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.61, p.2425, 5 November 1968. Whitlam expanded on these comments in the ensuing debate. See Ibid., pp.2425-2430.

4 CNIA, Vol.39, No.6, June 1968, p.442.

5 Ibid., No.10, October 1968, p.442.

remain a feature of the Australian official attitude throughout the remainder of the Liberal-Country Party's tenure of office, although the sense of strong conviction which had marked the Holt government's endorsements of American policy was lacking in the Gorton and McMahon governments.[1]

It was becoming evident that Australia could ill afford to identify with an American foreign policy that was increasingly coming under fire at all levels. Further, with the election of Richard Nixon in November 1968, it was clear that there would be a gradual dilution of American interest and participation in the Southeast Asian region.[2] However, it was not until early 1969 that the government revealed any kind of public understanding and acceptance of the changes that were taking place in Australia's immediate environment. In a speech on defence to the House of Representatives in February[3], Gorton, without setting any specific terminal date presented the government's decision to maintain forces of all arms in Malaysia and Singapore after the British withdrawal. While he acknowledged that, with the withdrawal of the British 'East of Suez', 'an era had ended', Gorton considered that, as problems still existed in the region, hopes for political stability would flounder if military security was not consolidated. The Prime Minister argued against the 'theoretical course' of a total withdrawal of all Australian military forces on the grounds that it would cast doubt on Australia's sincerity of purpose as far

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1 The most concrete example of this was Gorton's refusal, during the Tet offensive, to further increase Australia's contingent in Vietnam (CNIA, Vol.39, No.3, March 1968, p.111). Other examples included expressed "hopes" that the peace proposals of Johnson's two speeches (March and October 1968) would come to fruition. Yet, in urging North Vietnam to participate in the Paris peace talks, Gorton felt, 'we should not have too sanguine expectations of too early a settlement....' (CPD, H.R., Vol.61, p.2424, 5 November 1968).

2 Nixon foreshadowed changes in American foreign policy in speeches he made in August and September 1968, before his election. In expressing the need for greater military self-reliance on the part of countries in the region, Nixon favoured converting associations such as ASPAC to defensive alliances - a proposition Gorton had dismissed in July as impracticable (CNIA, Vol.39, No.7, July 1968, p.285).

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.62, pp.33-37, 25 February 1969. See also CNIA, Vol.40, No.2, February 1969, pp.41-46.

as Malaysia-Singapore and other countries of the region were concerned. Moreover, he argued that, logistically, it would be easier to deploy air and ground forces to the region if they were 'already set up and operating and needing only expansion instead of construction de novo'.[1]

Although this Australian commitment was to continue under existing arrangements (under terms governed by Australia's association with the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement), Gorton provided constraints to their use by indicating 'the conditions under which they will be there, and the role which we envisage they will fulfil'. In essence, an Australian military presence would not remain there:

> unless their presence continues to be actively desired by the governments of the countries in which they are stationed. While there, they are not intended for use, and will not be used, for the maintenance of internal civil law and order.

Gorton also made it clear that 'their presence, and their military cooperation with Malaysia and Singapore, are not directed against any other country in the region'. Instead, they would be used to train local Malaysian and Singaporean forces as they built up their defence capacity, and, with the Australian Government's consent, for use against 'externally promoted and inspired communist infiltration and subversion...'.[2]

There were three reasons why Gorton was not prepared to commit Australia to an open-ended role in Southeast Asia. The first related to the needs of Malaysia and Singapore, the second to the requests of the Americans and the third to encouragement from the British Conservative Opposition. All amounted to the political pressures which had dominated Gorton's thinking on the issue, rather than an attitude that finally saw the need for a fundamental

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.62, p.35, 25 February 1969. The forces planned to be retained were to consist of two squadrons of Mirages, totalling 42 aircraft in all. Except for one section of eight aircraft to be stationed at Tengah in Singapore, all aircraft would be based at Butterworth in Malaysia. In addition, Australia and New Zealand would combine in maintaining two battalions of ground troops, while each would maintain a naval ship 'for purposes of protection and not merely for purposes of training'.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.62, p.36.

reorientation of Australia's regional security posture.[1] With reference to the first reason, Gorton obviously found the Singaporean and Malaysian arguments for the retention of existing forces, as the focal point for the new Five Power arrangements, compelling. In fact, Singapore's arguments embraced the longer-term considerations of an Australian withdrawal, and suggested such an act on Australia's part may reduce criticism of Australia for eroding regional agreements and security. It was also articulated that in the wake of the collapse of the Five Power proposals, the subsequent vacuum might compel regional states to seek external protection from sources inimical to Australia's interests.[2]

The second reason centred on the United States of America and its desire that Australia participate in a regional arrangement, which it was trying to promote in Asia. Defence Minister Fairhall was to justify an Australian regional involvement in terms of America's strategy although, as was impressed upon Gorton during his May trip to the USA, the latter was not prepared to underwrite these arrangements.[3] Third, and perhaps more significantly, Gorton was encouraged by the Conservative Opposition in Britain which came to power in 1970 and which maintained a reduced presence in the area.

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1 In an interview with John Gorton, he preferred to see this development as the 'first conscious step' towards a reorientation in Australian foreign policy. Harris, personal interview with Gorton, Canberra, April 1985.

2 Richardson, J.L., "Australian Strategic and Defence Policies", p.246. See also The Age, 13 June 1969; The Australian Financial Review, 4 February 1969; and The Australian, 18 June 1969.

3 Richardson, J.L., "Australian Strategic Defence Policies", p.246. According to Richardson this view was impressed on Gorton during his visit to the USA in early May. Watt argues that the decision to retain forces in the region was made without any guarantee of military assistance from the USA, or any other power. It was made 'some two months before discussions with President Nixon in Washington on 6 and 7 May 1969, and some six months before President Nixon disclosed at Guam his modified policy toward Asia'. (Watt, A., "The ANZUS Treaty: Past, Present and Future", Australian Outlook, Vol.24, 1970, pp.33-34). Moreover, it fitted in with the Nixon doctrine, enunciated in July 1969, which 'emphasized that America's allies and partners must accept primary responsibility for their own defence' (Millar, T.B., Australia in Peace and War, p.217).

There was, however, another issue and it related to the nature of the threat to be met. While it was clear that the Five Power arrangements would not be used in the event of intercommunal strife within Malaysia, it could be presumed that, while not clear, the threat to be met appeared to be either conflict between Singapore and Malaysia or, as was increasingly suspected in Jakarta, a resurgence of Indonesian enmity.[1] In any event, by the end of 1971, Australia had joined Britain, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia in a Five Power arrangement which suceeded the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement.[2]

The Labor Opposition was extremely critical of the government's decision to retain a military presence in the region.[3] Whitlam, in particular, considered it was the occasion for Australia to make a fresh assessment and was critical of the military and legal basis of such a commitment. Whitlam believed that:

> In its search after chimeras, its clinging to the myths and slogans and shibboleths of the past, the government is missing the whole point of what a fruitful, constructive policy should be.[4]

But the decision to retain forces in the region was 'of an order without precedence in Australian history',[5] and was an attempt to address a complex problem and to meet pressing immediate demands. It was, nevertheless, a compromise policy which fell far short of the government's regionalist rhetoric. Whether it was essentially

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1 Ingleson, J., "South-East Asia" in Hudson, W.J., (ed.), Australia in World Affairs. 1971-1975, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1980, p.297.

2 The arrangement came into effect in November 1971, and it obliged the five countries to consult if there was an armed attack or threat against Singapore or Malaysia.

3 The ensuing debate brought down criticism from Messrs Barnard, Cross, Daly and Drs Gibbs and Cairns. CPD, H.R., Vol.62, pp.267-307, 27 February 1969.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.62, p.267 and p.270. The Opposition favoured the development of highly mobile forces which would be able to render assistance from Australia, rather than the stationing of insignificant elements in the region itself. The government was urged instead to concentrate on building up indigenous forces through training, the supply of arms and technical assistance. Ibid., p.273.

5 Millar, T.B., Australia in Peace and War, p.193.

a policy of the line of least resistance or a conscious attempt to promote indigenous self-reliance through the minimum gesture towards a system of regional security, the Labor Opposition was extremely critical of a decision that was characterized as an exercise in 'imperial nostalgia'.[1] But an explanation of this sort failed to account adequately for the broader political pressures that were brought to bear and that were so strongly in favour of an Australian military commitment.

While these were in evidence at the international level they also emanated from the domestic arena. On one level, the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) had brought strong pressure to bear on the government, while public opinion polls reflected strong majority support for the commitment.[2] With the federal elections due to be held in October 1969, political wisdom seemed to direct that no further strain be placed on the DLP's already deep discontent with the Gorton government's foreign policy. This discontent was clearly in evidence in DLP criticisms of a speech made by the new Minister for External Affairs, G. Freeth. Addressing himself to the questions raised by increased Soviet activity in the region,[3] Freeth put the considered[4] view that:

> Australia has to be watchful [it, however]... need not panic whenever a Russian appears... In principle it is natural that a world power such as the Soviet Union should seek to promote a presence and national influence in important regions of the world such as the Indian Ocean area.[5]

While the speech was favourably received by the press and the parliamentary Opposition, it 'was widely reported, almost as widely

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1 Ibid., p.194.

2 Richardson, J.L., "Australian Strategic and Defence Policies", p.247, quoting polls published in the Sydney Morning Herald, 16 October 1969.

3 This activity included a Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean toward the middle of 1968, and a Soviet diplomatic and trade offensive in Malaysia and Singapore. There were also incidents involving a Soviet fishing trawler and Australian fishing vessels.

4 Farran, A., "The Freeth Experiment", Australian Outlook, Vol.26, No.1, April 1972, pp.46-58.

5 CPD, H.R., Vol.64, p.312, 14 August 1969.

misrepresented and heavily criticized from many angles'.[1] In particular, the DLP leader, Senator Gair, saw it as a radical shift on the part of the government to the left.

These pressures saw the Gorton government move away from Freeth's statement, essentially because the October 1969 elections loomed and DLP preferences hung in the balance. With the election over (in which Freeth lost his seat), Australian public opinion swinging toward favouring a removal of forces from Vietnam,[2] and Nixon announcing in December that the American Government intended to withdraw 50 000 troops by April 1970, Gorton announced Australia's intention to withdraw from Vietnam, in concert with the Americans.[3]

Throughout this two-year period, it was becoming increasingly clear that Australia's security policy needed revision. In particular, the strong anti-communism that marked the policies of Gorton's predecessors was becoming untenable in the light of evolving American policy. However, the constraints on any movement toward accommodating these changes lay less in the intellectual arena and more in the domestic one. In what was described by Farran, Freeth's Private Secretary at the time, as an 'experiment',[4] External Affairs Minister Freeth attempted to construct a bridge between these two arenas. If it had not been for the federal elections, and an L-CP preoccupation with DLP preferences, Freeth's statement could have marked a new watershed in Australian foreign policy. However, instead of introducing tentative steps toward a reassessment of Australia's position, it only reflected, if not proved the extent to which the L-CP government was shackled by, past attitudes and policies.[5]

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1 Millar, T.B., Australia in Peace and War, p.352.

2 Greenwood, G., "The Political Debate in Australia", p.88. According to Greenwood this shift took place only after the changes in US policy in Vietnam had become clear.

3 CNIA, Vol.41, 1970, pp.228-231 quoted in Richardson, J.L., "Australian Strategic and Defence Policies", p.239.

4 Farran, A., "The Freeth Experiment", p.46.

5 There were five major assumptions upon which successive L-CP governments had founded their approach to foreign and defence policy. The first, proving to be the most durable

While it was evident that Australian foreign policy was still founded on balance of power considerations, the important innovation lay in Freeth's judgement that the Soviet Union, as well as the USA, could play a positive role in the maintenance of the regional balance. His successor, W. McMahon, changed the rhetoric but kept the broad parameters of policy, which quickly came to be accepted into the new decade.[1] Moreover, McMahon embraced the notion that a role could also be fruitfully played by Japan, although he considered this role was political and economic, and not a military one.[2] By the end of 1971, McMahon, now Prime Minister, included China, along with the USA, Russia and Japan, among the powers through which regional stability and peace could be maintained.[3]

Indeed, by the early 1970s the marked international changes and shifts in relationships were too obvious to ignore. As Richardson concluded:

> the image of Asia polarized between Chinese-style communism and the American-supported 'countries on the fringes of China from Korea to India'(1) was replaced by an image of multi-power rivalry. The United States maintains its treaty commitments but 'calls on the countries of the region to do more themselves to provide for their own security'. The Soviet Union 'has given notice of its expanding maritime power and its interest in exerting influence upon many countries surrounding the Indian Ocean'. China's threat is curiously diminished: it 'aspires to challenge the influence of the United States and the Soviet Union alike, and continues to

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of the themes of international politics, rested on the notion of monolithic communism as opposed by the Western alliance system. Second, that communism's encroachment into the Asian-Pacific region was inimical to Australia's security interests. Third, it was argued that, to meet this situation, Australia had to rely on one or both of its more powerful allies, as it had during the Second World War. Fourth, Australian diplomacy would need to be directed toward encouraging one of her allies -- the USA -- to maintain a military presence in the region. Finally, there was the concept of 'Forward Defence', in part a demonstration of our loyalty to this major ally, and an attempt, through the forward deployment of Australian forces, to keep communism as far away from our northern shores as practicable.

1 Millar, T.B., Australia in Peace and War, p.352.

2 CNIA, Vol.41, No.3, March 1970, p.97.

3 Ibid., Vol.42, No.11, November 1971, p.609.

> stimulate pro-Peking revolutionary ferment wherever it can, around and beyond its borders'.(2) Japan... 'will have great opportunities to play a progressive and constructive part in Asia.(3) Indonesia, India and Britain are further 'major countries [which] react cumulatively or competitively with each other'.(4).[1]

Clearly, the bipolar international system was breaking down. The winding down of an American presence in the region, begun in the Johnson period and formalized in the Nixon Doctrine, raised questions as to the validity of some of Australia's assumptions concerning the role which America played in support of Australia's security interests in the region. These same doubts were raised about Great Britain as well, when the decision was made to withdraw from 'East of Suez' as well as seek entry to the European Economic Community (EEC). However, it was the American's role in Asia that underwent the most rigorous reappraisal, with questions being raised as to the validity of an historical search for a 'protector'. Alongside this, doubts also were raised about the concept of 'Forward Defence' and its relationship to interventionism on the part of successive American Governments. This debate was not only in evidence in the Parliament -- with, principally, Gorton, Fairhall and Fraser on one side and Whitlam, Barnard, and Cairns on the other -- but also in the media, especially journals and newspapers, as well as among a wide range of publicists and academics.[2]

It was during the Prime Ministerships of Gorton and McMahon that the Australian government was impelled to recognize the inadequacy of these assumptions and to move away from them. On one level, it could be argued that a reorientation, guided by strategic reviews and reassessments initiated by both the Gorton and McMahon governments between 1968 and 1972, took place in Australian foreign

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1 Richardson, J.L., "Australian Strategic and Defence Policies", p.261. Richardson was quoting, respectively, (1) Hasluck, CNIA, Vol.38, October 1967, p.421, (2) Department of Defence, Defence Report, 1970, p.4, (3) Fraser, the new Defence Minister, CNIA, Vol.41, 1970, p.138, (4) Defence Report, 1970, p.4.

2 Among those prominent in the debate were Bruce Grant, B.A. Santamaria, Denis Warner, Hedley Bull, Harry Gelber, Max Teichmann and W. McMahon Ball.

and defence policies.[1] At a more fundamental level, however, the L-CP government was too shackled by its past policies to be able to make a radical break with them. Thus, it was unable to strike out in any new directions.

While the reasons for this lay in the nature of the nexus between the domestic arena and the conduct of Australia's foreign policy, a closer analysis of Australia's decision-making structures during this period exposes two main features -- discontinuity and a lack of cohesiveness. With reference to the former, a coincidence of views between Australia and her 'great and powerful friends' gave rise to rather sensible policies on the part of the former. When a gap opened up between Australia and her two major allies, Australian policies were emptied of much of their substance, and modifications had to occur in Australian thinking. Further complicating this issue was the fact that during the period in question there were a number of major changes to the Australian foreign policy decision-making process, from the Ministerial level through to the bureaucracy. All such changes had implications for the substance and conduct of Australia's policies.

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[1] This included Gorton's policy of limiting severely Australia's regional military involvement, and movement towards a doctrine of greater Australian self-reliance (See the Australian Financial Review, 10 May 68; the Australian, 13 May 68; and the Sydney Morning Herald, 30 May 68. See also CNIA, Vol.39, No.6, June 1968, p.250). During Gorton's tenure of office, Freeth's speech of August 1969 signalled the Australian Government's reassessment of relations with the communist powers (It needs to be added however, that while the speech was cleared by Gorton, it was not cleared by the Cabinet. See Bull, Hedley, "Australia and the Great Powers in Asia", in Greenwood, G. and Harper, N., (eds.), Australia in World Affairs 1966-1970, p.345). While this was abandoned, due ostensibly to domestic considerations, the L-CP Government, in the wake of the 1969 elections, initiated a withdrawal of troops from Vietnam and Thailand, and played a decisive role in the Five Power arrangements and contributed to the ANZUK (Australian, New Zealand and British) force in Malaysia and Singapore (CNIA, Vol.42, No.3, March 1970, pp.95-103). Finally, under the Prime Ministership of McMahon, Australia, albeit cautiously, moved away from a policy of recognising Taipei as the sole government, and thus being entitled to a seat in the United Nations. McMahon's 'Two Chinas' policy was eroded by Peking's acceptance into the United Nations (Millar, T.B., Australia in War and Peace, p.292). Australia also attended the Cambodia Conference in May 1970 and moved closer to Japan in the political and economic spheres.

Indonesia's Role in Australia's Foreign Policy Options

Australia had spent the best part of two years searching for new foreign policy options as a result of the British and American decisions to withdraw from Southeast Asia. Integral to this was a desire on the part of the Australian Government to seek security through military cooperation with its neighbours, particularly Indonesia. For Indonesia's part, she preferred to emphasize greater economic cooperation in trade and technical matters, and declared an aversion to any kind of involvement in military pacts.[1] In this context, discussions between the two countries throughout 1968, highlighted the differences between Australian and Indonesian approaches to regional security.

While it was initially evident that there were grounds for disagreement between Australia and Indonesia on the best means of promoting regional security,[2] there were indications that Australia was gradually moving towards a closer identification with the Indonesian position. By the early 1970s, it appears that Australia, in attempting to reformulate its regional role as a result of British and American withdrawals, had moved closer to the Indonesian concept of 'national resilience'.

Moreover, this rapprochement was encouraged by the USA, as Indonesia was being increasingly considered to be the linchpin of an American scheme for stability and order in the Southeast Asian region. As the American Defence Secretary, William Rogers, stated at an ANZUS council meeting in Australia in August 1969, America now considered that 'Indonesia [was] the key to all efforts for stabilizing the situation in Southeast Asia'. In this context, the former American Ambassador to Indonesia and then Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern and Pacific Affairs, Marshall Green, encouraged Indonesia to 'determine her own course' and argued that Australia should strengthen cooperation with Indonesia, encouraging her to increase her potential to play a role as a leading

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1 Crouch, H., The Army and Politics in Indonesia, p.339, and van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, p.194.

2 Mackie, J.A.C., "Indonesia and Australia", Gelber, H.G., (ed.), Problems of Australian Defence, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1970, p.43-46.

stabilizing factor in the region.[1]

In early February 1968, Hasluck visited Southeast Asia to hold discussions with Malaysia and Singapore over the implications of the British announcement to withdraw 'East of Suez'. These talks, which also included discussions in Jakarta with Foreign Minister Malik and President Suharto were informal and exploratory and were not intended to seek commitments or to advance any particular proposals.[2] Before Hasluck made this visit, it was suggested that during talks in January 1967 with Suharto and Malik, the External Affairs Minister favoured formal military links between the countries of the region, including Indonesia.[3] While Hasluck indicated that he always believed that Southeast Asian security had to be sought through regional cooperation, he denied to the House of Representatives late in March 1968 that he had made such an approach. He argued that it was not the time to enter into realistic discussions about establishing 'one big defence pact covering all the countries of the region'. However, he conceded that he envisaged:

> a variety of arrangements, some multilateral, some bilateral, some specific, some less clearly defined, which will contribute to regional security. They can range from the exchange of security information to actual military cooperation. Regional security even now can be promoted in a variety of ways, including developing economic and diplomatic cooperation.[4]

Hasluck's interpretations were subsequently considered as amounting to an official acknowledgement that to increase defence cooperation

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1 Jakarta Times, 21 August 1969. For strong arguments alleging the formative influence of American policy on the development of the Indonesian-Australian relationship during this period, see Young, K.E., The Guam Doctrine: Implements of Implementation, Key State Relations: Australia and Indonesia, Maclean, New York, 1970.

2 CNIA, Vol.39, No.2, February 1968, p.66.

3 See for example, remarks by Opposition Leader Whitlam in CPD H.R., Vol.50, p.220, 17 August, 1967. J.A.C. Mackie argued that Indonesia had been approached, implicitly by Australia, to join ASPAC. Mackie, J.A.C., Indonesia and Australia, p.44. van der Kroef, J.M., suggests pressures to join ASPAC came from Japan and from within Indonesia. See van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, pp.197-198.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.58, p.453, 26 March 1968.

between Australia and Indonesia, however loosely defined in the beginning, would play a major part in promoting regional security.[1] What is more, Hasluck had noted with satisfaction that while Indonesia had adopted the view that becoming involved in military pacts would be prejudicial to a 'free and active foreign policy', it was already developing bilateral military cooperation with neighbouring countries.[2]

In this context, in August 1967, Australia had expressed its satisfaction at the formation of ASEAN and its approval of the declared aims of the organization.[3] However, this approval must be viewed in the context of Hasluck's statement to a closed session of the SEATO council meeting in Wellington in April 1968. Referring to the increase in communist subversion and insurgency throughout Southeast Asia, he pointed out the considerable scope for security cooperation -- cooperation which would be greatly facilitated by membership of Southeast Asian countries in such organizations as SEATO, ASPAC and ASEAN. While Hasluck argued that the development of an effective cooperative community of Southeast Asian nations 'would pose a really formidable barrier to communist expansionist ambitions', he also stressed the need to join policies for regional security with 'equally vigorous action to promote investment, commodity support schemes ... and expanding trade opportunities'.[4]

It is evident that such an attitude was very much in line with that of the Indonesian government[5] which envisaged regional cooperation within ASEAN as a means with which to enhance the economic and political viability of national governments in the Southeast Asian region, thus strengthening their resistance to communist subversion. It emerged later in 1968 that the focus of Indonesia's effort in ASEAN was the establishment of political and economic stability which constituted the essential prerequisites

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1 The Australian, 29 March 1968.

2 CNIA, Vol.39, No.3, 1968, p.87.

3 Ibid., Vol.38, No.8, 1967, pp.328-329. ASEAN's aims were to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development, and to promote peace and stability in the region.

4 CNIA, Vol.29, No.4, 1968, pp.140-141.

5 See a speech by Foreign Minister Malik before the DPR, Department of Information, Jakarta, 1967, pp.3-9.

for an effective defence system.[1] Yet, at the same time, Indonesia advocated the necessity for Southeast Asian States to sever their institutional links with extra-regional powers.[2]

Because of Australia's extensive security links with the USA and its proposal to preserve its military presence in the Malaysia and Singapore area after the British withdrawal, such an issue might have caused problems in the Australian-Indonesian relationship. However, in view of the obstacles which acted against the establishment of effective regional cooperation in Southeast Asia, and as most ASEAN members maintained the necessity of retaining their defence links with outside powers, it seemed that Indonesia was prepared to accommodate the Australian regional presence. Adam Malik, during his visit to Australia in March 1968 (before the Johnson speech), asserted that he did not object to such a presence in Malaysia and Singapore after the withdrawal of British forces, although he added that Indonesia hoped that in the long term, the need for Australian forces in the region would be obviated by the build-up of the national defence capabilities of Southeast Asian nations.[3]

While the official reason given for Indonesia's acceptance of the Australian forces was that it was part of a Commonwealth defence arrangement, it is probable that Indonesia might have seen a positive value in the contribution which Australian forces could make to the security of Malaysia. While Malik had stressed that it was not Indonesian Government policy to bring defence matters within the scope of ASEAN, it seemed that this did not rule out the possibility of Indonesia's participation in a loose arrangement with Malaysia for bilateral military cooperation, directed at Communist insurrection in the Kalimantan border area.[4] Thus, the support which the Australian Forces could provide for the Singaporean and Malaysian forces could only have proved beneficial to Indonesia, especially in view of Australian assurances that its military presence was not directed against any country in the

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1 Antara, 2 November 1968.

2 Refer to The Build-up of National Endurance in Developing Countries, Departemen Pertahanan, Jakarta, 1971, pp.2-6.

3 The Age, 22 March 1968.

4 Armed Forces Courier, 13 March 1968.

region.

Thus, upon his return from Indonesia in June 1968, Prime Minister Gorton was able to report to the National Press Club that he had secured Indonesia's acceptance of Australia's peaceful intentions and of any decision regarding an Australian contribution to the defence of Singapore and Malaysia after 1971.[1] However, Indonesia had been notably cautious in its views on the possibility of increased defence cooperation with Australia and, when Gorton suggested that Australia and Indonesia enter a non-aggression pact, the Indonesian reaction was, if anything, hostile. It reiterated its principle of independent and active foreign policy which prohibited Indonesia from entering any military pact. At the same time, it was argued in the Indonesian press that Australia's proposal of a non-aggression pact was directed against the revival of Indonesia as a military power in Southeast Asia.[2] The only outcome of Gorton's miscalculation of the position held by the Indonesian government on regional security was a rather ineffectual Cultural Agreement between Indonesia and Australia,[3] although, in the final joint communique, the Australian Prime Minister and President Suharto agreed that such a step in regional cooperation represented the best means of strengthening the national independence and integrity of Southeast Asian countries.[4]

It would appear, therefore, that the difference between Australian and Indonesian official approaches to regional security, was quite marked. Where Australia sought military cooperation with its neighbours in order to overcome its strategic concerns (for example, China), Indonesia saw the foundations of regional security

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1 The Australian, 21 June 1968.

2 Merdeka, 15 June 1968. It has been argued by Allan Reid in The Gorton Experiment, Shakespeare Head Press, Sydney, 1971, pp.54-5, that John Gorton did fear, during his time as Prime Minister, that an economic revival by Indonesia might see it re-emerge as a military power in Southeast Asia, and therefore, as a threat to Australian security.

3 For a detailed examination of this agreement see J.A.C. Mackie's article, "The Cultural Agreement: Prospects and Possibilities", Quadrant, Vol. XIII, No.5, September-October, 1969, pp.117-127. This article is examined in detail in Chapter Six.

4 CNIA, Vol.39, No.6, 1968, p.233.

in greater economic cooperation with its neighbours.[1] The Indonesian Government emphasized that it hoped for greater economic cooperation between Australia and Indonesia in trade and technical matters, particularly sea and air communications, and indicated that Australia's industrial power could be used to develop West Irian.[2]

Even though the Indonesian Government dismissed the possibility of its involvement in defence pacts, it was evident that certain military elements in the government were of the opinion that the development of regional security cooperation could take the form of informal bilateral arrangements such as those which existed with Malaysia.[3] It was apparent that even Adam Malik did not rule out the possibility that bilateral cooperation within ASEAN might lead to closer defence and security cooperation, short of military alliances.[4] But this emphasis on developing informal approaches to the problem of regional security cooperation fell within the bounds of Indonesia's declared aversion to any kind of involvement in military pacts. It was designed to avoid any interpretation that Indonesia's rigid domestic anti-Communism stand and its hospitality to Western investment might invalidate its

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1 Editorial, Kompas, 16 June 1968, cited in Bulletin (Indonesian Current Affairs Translation Service), Antara, Jakarta, 1968.

2 Jakarta Times, 16 June 1968.

3 See the statement made by General Panggabean in Kompas, 19 January 1967.

4 Malik, Interview with the Far Eastern Economic Review, 5 September 1968, pp.568-570. In this context, it might be noted that the Australian and Indonesian armed forces were already developing informal channels of communication. In February 1968, there was a resumption of the training of Indonesian army officers in Australia, a scheme which had been shelved during confrontation. In March, an Australian army spokesman presaged the development of a variety of contacts and forms of cooperation with Indonesia, including training visits by ships and aircraft and personnel. By May, a month before the Five Power talks on Southeast Asian defence questions were due to be held, a senior Indonesian official, Air Chief Marshall Roesmin Nurjadin, visited Australia. The Australian, 29 March 1968.

policy of neutrality.[1]

Thus, while in 1968 it was evident that some grounds for disagreement between Indonesia and Australia on the best means of promoting regional security still existed, there were indications that the latter was gradually moving towards a closer identification with the Indonesian position. When Gorton announced on 25 February 1969, that Australian forces would remain in Singapore and Malaysia,[2] he again stressed, as noted earlier, that their presence was not directed against any other country in the region and that they would remain in the area only as long as needed by the host governments.[3] Moreover, it was argued that by assisting the defence of one part of the region, it would

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1 Nevertheless, in July 1968, Malik was driven to deny reports that there was momentum towards turning ASEAN into a military alliance, and that three American military bases -- linked up with American military installations in Thailand, Australia and the Philippines -- were being built in Indonesia (Antara, 24 July 1968). Despite Malik's denials, rumours persisted that the USA had a strong military interest in ASEAN (eg) On 19 October 1968, during his election campaign for the presidency, Richard Nixon suggested that the Asian nations should look to developing regional defence pacts as 'buffers' between the major powers. While such rumours died out, they carried the interpretation (not lost on Jakarta) that Indonesia could only have viewed a more direct military involvement with Australia, a major ally of the USA, as detrimental to its objective of maintaining a non-aligned foreign policy stance.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.62, pp.33-37, 25 February 1969.

3 Ibid., p.36. The Sydney Morning Herald (28 February 1969) editorialized that the most significant reaction to Gorton's statement came from Jakarta, where a Foreign Ministry spokesman indicated that Indonesia would have no objection to the stationing of Australian Forces in Singapore and Malaysia. It alleged that this amounted to a statement by the Indonesian Government that it regarded Australia as a Southeast Asian power with legitimate regional defence interests, which were compatible with its own. Indonesia's lack of objections to the Australian military presence, however, hardly amounted to an uncritical endorsement of it. Yet, the Indonesian Government could hardly have mistaken the intent behind the Australian move. No matter what the military rationale of the Australian commitment, it was evident that it constituted the first step towards shaping a regional policy without reliance on the support of a major power.

indirectly contribute to regional stability as a whole.[1] This was re-inforced in April, when the Defence Minister, Fairhall, intimated that because the USA had indicated that it expected a greater defence contribution from the region, the Australian commitment to Malaysia and Singapore, was seen as 'laying the groundwork for a desirable, wider alliance of Southeast Asian nations....[2]

Malik pursued the same theme following talks with Freeth in Jakarta during the same month, and it set the tone for subsequent discussions between the two governments for the next two years. While he reaffirmed that Indonesia saw no urgency to arrange a military pact in Southeast Asia, he hinted at the possibility that Indonesia and Australia might agree to cooperate in 'some sort of security arrangement to neutralize the area'.[3] Nevertheless, it appeared that Australia's increasing emphasis on economic development as the main foundation of political stability, clearly complemented the stated objectives of Indonesian foreign policy.

Conclusion

By the early 1970s, Australia's relationship with Indonesia held out great promise. However, there remained a tension at the heart of Australia's policy which was based on a strong desire to see Indonesia emerge as a stronger Southeast Asian power, but not one that would dominate the region. Indonesia continued to worry many Australians as being representative:

> of the threatening and unstable forces in South East Asia. It thus fitted the traditional Australian view of Asia as a hostile and unpredictable field for foreign policy, in which Australia, although eloquent about neighbourliness, could best serve its interests by alliances with outside powers.[4]

Australia continued to enjoy the friendship of those powers -- Britain and the USA -- but the assumptions of the Cold War period of the 1950s and 1960s had begun to crumble, and the global roles of these two major actors on the international stage began to fade.

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.62, p.36, 25 February 1967.

2 CNIA, Vol.40, No.4, 1969, p.130.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 26 April 1969.

4 Bruce Grant in the Age, 17 August 1970.

Now, more than at any time in its history, Australia had to make its own way, develop its own policies, initiate and conduct its own diplomacy, and forge its own defence in an environment more benevolent but in which it was more a separate entity. Essentially, Australia was compelled to accommodate a more extreme form of independence.

More than this, Australia's external relations had been based on what were considered, particularly with the USA and Britain, to be 'natural' alignments. They gave Australia the freedom to be comfortably embraced not only by their long-term interests but by their ethnic and ideological mores. However, Australia now faced the lonely and more difficult problems involved in forging and maintaining alignments with states with whom it lacked ethnic, cultural or historical bonds, and from whom it could not expect any special consideration or tolerance. This would involve:

> clarify[ing] in our own minds just what these countries matter to us, if it is not primarily for reasons of security, what part they play in our broader foreign policy strategies and objectives, and how we fit into their policies likewise. Because of our excessive preoccupation with security and the British or American connection in the past, we have given far too little serious attention to these questions until recently.[1]

Such was the case with our relationship with Indonesia. It was, however, only when doubt was cast upon the security of these alignments in the late 1960s that the Australian Government was prepared to deepen its relationship with Indonesia. As we have seen, this gave rise to an improvement in relations during two distinct stages: the first coincided with the change of government in Indonesia for the purpose of peaceful coexistence; and the second was stimulated by the changing strategic situation in the region, which demanded practical regional cooperation. It was then that Australia, together with other western and Asian powers, participated in measures for the stabilization of Indonesia.

The significance of the international pressures at work on Australia's foreign policy and of the changing direction of Australia-Indonesia relations at this time was to emerge during the conduct of Australia's policy on West New Guinea. Indeed, the

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[1] Mackie, J.A.C., "Australia's Relations with Indonesia: Principles and Policies, I", Australian Outlook, Vol.28, No.1, 1974, p.10.

question of West New Guinea, as this once more came to the fore in 1969, came at a time when the stability of Indonesia, now at a critical stage of its development, was seen to require a successful outcome of the 'Act of Free Choice'.

CHAPTER THREE

BILATERAL ACCOMMODATION: WEST IRIAN'S 'ACT OF FREE CHOICE' AND AUSTRALIA'S 'KOALA' PHILOSOPHY

Introduction

This Chapter focuses on Australia's West New Guinea policy between 1965 and 1969, the year that the 'Act of Free Choice' was conducted. It is divided into three main sections. The first, as a way of background, briefly reviews the origins of the West New Guinea dispute, and its emergence as an international issue during the 1950s and early 1960s. Second, Australia's diplomacy throughout this period is examined. At first, for security reasons, the Australian Government gave strong public and diplomatic support to Dutch retention of the territory. However, it did not have the unequivocal support of the international community (including the USA) and, contrary to the declared objectives of its diplomacy, Australia slowly reconciled itself to the possibility of a settlement of the issue. By the early 1960s, Australia's diplomacy was outdistanced by events, and it had no effective choice other than to accept the unpalatable settlement structured under the auspices of the USA and the UN, including the final Dutch-Indonesian agreement's call for the Papuan people to experience an 'Act of Free Choice' by the end of 1969.

Finally, we turn to an examination of Australia's West New Guinea policy between 1965 and 1969. While Jakarta's attitude on the 'Act of Free Choice' was at best equivocal, an important objective of Australian policy during this four-year period was the overriding need to cultivate good relations with the new Indonesia. In circumstances where Indonesia's resolve to acquire the former colony overshadowed the indigenous Papuan population's right to self-determination, the purpose of Australia's policy was to bring about a settlement basically favourable to Indonesia, in the hope that this would positively influence the course of Indonesia's evolving international development.

The West New Guinea Question Under Sukarno: A Background

Indonesian control over West Irian has never been uncontested.

Ever since Indonesia gained independence it has faced, at different levels, an Irian 'problem' of one kind or another.[1] Initially, the problem was the recovery of the province from the Dutch. Before the Second World War, the territory of Netherlands New Guinea was administered from Batavia (Jakarta) as an integral part of the colony of Netherlands India. Under Dutch law and practice, the western half of the island of New Guinea was Dutch colonial territory, although less explored than most other parts of the colony, and with a smaller proportion of the people under direct control of the colonial authorities. Apart from a small oil field centred at the port of Sorong, on the Bird's Head Peninsula, the Dutch derived little economic benefit from the territory.

Following the proclamation of the Indonesian Republic, there were doubts within the counsels of the nationalist movement about the territorial extent of the Indonesian Republic, specifically on the questions of whether or not to include Irian Jaya, East Timor, the British territories in North Borneo and the Malay Peninsula. It was ultimately decided by the counsels that the Republic should have exactly the same boundaries as the Netherlands Indies. As Hastings explained:

> Indonesia's claim to West New Guinea ... rested on legitimacy. All that had formed part of the former Netherlands East Indies, including West New Guinea, belonged to the successor state - Indonesia.[2]

This view was not only held by the clearly anti-Dutch Republican forces, but also by leaders of the federalist states outside Java, which were set up under Dutch auspices and were much more sympathetic to Dutch interests.

Initially, there was no indication that the Dutch regarded New Guinea as being different from other parts of their colony. However, by the end of 1946 there was growing pressure on them, especially from the Eurasian community, to set New Guinea aside from the rest of the colony, as a homeland for them. It was not until 1949, though, that the issue emerged as a major barrier separating the Dutch and Indonesian protagonists. As Mackie was to note thirty years later:

The Dutch insistence on retaining possession of what they

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1 For a sketch of the preceding 50 years see Hastings, P., New Guinea, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1969, pp.200-201.

2 Hastings, P.,"West Irian - 1969", p.15.

> called 'Dutch New Guinea' at the time of the 1949 Round Table Conference negotiations leading to Indonesian independence, for reasons of Dutch domestic politics and wounded amour propre, created a deadlock which was broken only by the unsatisfactory compromise decision to postpone further negotiations on the issue until 1950.[1]

None of the Dutch or Indonesian camps could agree on the status of the territory. The Dutch wanted it excluded from the soon to be established United States of Indonesia, while both the Republican and Federalists groups, for different reasons, wanted it included. Although discussions on the matter were postponed until after the United States of Indonesia had come into existence in 1949, agreement was not reached even then.

During the next twelve years, de facto control of the territory remained with the Dutch. However, the Indonesians argued that de jure sovereignty rested with them, and that Dutch occupation of the region was illegal. As a result, successive Indonesian governments sought to have the territory returned to Indonesian de facto control. Initially, the claim was pursued by diplomatic means, but after these had consistently failed, and following the rise to power of Sukarno in the late 1950s, resort was then to military means.[2] However, the crucial turning point in the struggle was not any particular strategy adopted by Jakarta, but a change of attitude by the United States of America. Although a firm supporter of the Dutch position in the 1950s, the USA switched direction following the election of John F. Kennedy to the Presidency, and came out in favour of a transfer of the territory to Indonesia. An agreement to this effect was signed by the Dutch and Indonesian representatives in New York in August 1962, with the provision that the territory be administered by a United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) from October 1962 until 1 May 1963. At the end of this seven month transitory period, the territory would be turned over to Indonesia, with the condition

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1 Mackie, J.A.C., "Does Indonesia Have Expansionist Designs on Papua New Guinea?", in May, R.J., (ed.) The Indonesian-Papua New Guinea Border: Irianese Nationalism and Small State Diplomacy. Department of Political and Social Change Working Paper No.2, Research School of Pacific Studies, ANU, August 1979, p.45.

2 Mackie, J.A.C., "Does Indonesia Have Expansionist Designs on Papua New Guinea?" p.45.

that a UN supervised 'Act of Free Choice' be held before the end of 1969, in which the Irianese could determine whether or not they wished to remain part of Indonesia.

Since 1963, Indonesia's main problem regarding its province was the management and administration and, in particular, the need to balance local needs and expectations against national ones. It appears that with some exceptions, the latter's interests and/or needs have generally been predominant. This is illustrated by the way in which the 'Act of Free Choice' was carried out in 1969. Judging by Suharto's declaration on 3 February 1969, before the manner of the 'Act of Free Choice' was announced, that secession would be considered as 'treason' to the Indonesian Republic, it seems that the 'New Order' Government, like Sukarno, never had the intention of allowing or tolerating opposition to West Irian's integration into Indonesia. The net result was a stage-managed, and often particularly heavy handed, set of 'consultations', the consequences of which were never in doubt.[1]

The Australian Position

The Australian Government, from the time of Indonesian independence to the transfer of West Irian sovereignty in 1962-63, had supported the Dutch arguments for the retention of West New Guinea -- a position which had also been backed, although not unanimously, by the Australian Labor Party (ALP).[2] The government's first statement on the West Irian question was given to the Australian Parliament in 1950, when, on 9 March the then Minister for External Affairs, Percy Spender, giving his first statement on international affairs, made a brief reference to the island of New Guinea and, specifically, to the West New Guinea

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1 For an excellent account of these proceedings see Hastings, P., New Guinea, pp.220-231. This account is strongly based on his reporting, during 1968-69, on the 'Act' for the Australian.

2 For an account of this period, and of the conduct of Australian foreign policy see Mackie, J.A.C., "Australia and Indonesia, 1945-1960", in Greenwood, Gordon and Harper, Norman, (eds.), Australia in World Affairs, 1956-1960. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1963, pp.272-326; Beddie, D.B., "Australian Policy Towards Indonesia," pp.123-139; Albinski, H.S.,"Australia and the Dutch New Guinea Dispute," International Journal, 16, Autumn, 1969, pp.358-382.

issue as it had unfolded throughout the preceding months.[1] In an argument that was coldly realistic and based on serious security concerns, Spender asserted that New Guinea was important to Australia's security and strategic situation. He subsequently endorsed this view three months later when, on 8 June 1950, he rejected Indonesia's territorial claims on the grounds that West New Guinea was distinct from Indonesia ethnically and developmentally, and revealed that any arrangements made by Indonesia and the Netherlands concerning the status of West New Guinea would involve Australia's 'direct and vital interests'. If such was the case, these 'interests [were] entitled to be considered'.[2]

Although Spender's successor, R. G. Casey,[3] urged that the West New Guinea question be kept in 'cold storage'[4]:

> He contested Indonesian legal claims to the territory, stressed the differences between the Papuans of West New Guinea, and the Indo-Malayans of the 'Indonesian islands'... and re-affirmed the strategic importance for Australia of the whole island of New Guinea.[5]

Unfortunately, the West New Guinea issue could not be kept in 'cold storage' because, as Hastings rightly stated:

> PKI propaganda, outraged nationalism, relentless hostility to the Dutch and President Sukarno's own particular notions of grandeur combined to produce in Indonesia inexorable pressures which could not be satisfied with anything less than the return of the lost province.[6]

Tensions mounted in relations between Australia and Indonesia as Australia maintained her rigid pro-Dutch policy on the West New Guinea question. Yet, despite their differences, efforts were made

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.206, p.633, 9 March 1950.

2 Ibid., Vol.208, pp.3922-3923, 8 June 1950. Australia did not secure any support to this claim to be a party principal.

3 Casey succeeded Spender in 1951, with the latter's appointment to Washington as Australian Ambassador.

4 Grant, B., Indonesia, p.156.

5 Watt, A., The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy 1938-1965. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1968, pp.252-253.

6 Hastings, P., "West Irian - 1969", p.15.

to stabilize the relationship between the two countries. It was in this context that Foreign Minister Subandrio visited Australia in 1959 -- a visit that produced a joint statement which aroused much controversy in Australia.

The main thrust of this statement was that, while differences were acknowledged between the two countries as to the West Irian situation 'if any agreement were reached between the Netherlands and Indonesia as parties principal, arrived at by peaceful processes and in accordance with internationally accepted procedures, Australia would not oppose such an agreement'.[1] The admission that Australia would not oppose such an agreement represented a considerable change in Australia's policy and brought the wrath of the press and the Parliament down upon the government.[2] Although a shift in policy was denied by the government in the intervening period, Menzies made a visit to Indonesia, reaffirming the thrust of the original communique. By this time, it seemed that Australia was prepared to accept a decision by negotiation, whatever that decision might be, in return for firm promises that the matter would not be settled 'by force or threats of force'.[3]

In the following eighteen months until the August 1962 Agreement, developments in the West New Guinea issue were crucial to Australia's relations with Indonesia. At one level the Indonesians were insisting that the United States keep out of the affair, while seeking massive injections of Soviet military aid. On another, the Dutch, under a newly elected conservative government, moved in association with the UN toward accelerating the process of self-government for their colony. Australia continued its line, recognizing Netherlands' sovereignty, while supporting self-determination. It also opposed Indonesian

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1 Quoted in Watt, A., The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, p.254.

2 See the Sydney Morning Herald, 16 February 1959; 18 February 1959; the Age, 19 February 1959; the Courier Mail, 16 February 1959, 21 February 1959. The statement was debated in the Australian Parliament on 24 February. CPD, H.R., Vol.22, 24 February 1959, pp.194-219.

3 Greenwood, G., "Australian Foreign Policy in Action", in Greenwood, Gordon and Harper, Norman, (eds.), Australia in World Affairs 1961-1965 Cheshire, Melbourne, 1968, p.88.

objectives unless they could be achieved by peaceful means together with a deliberate choice on the part of the indigenous peoples.[1]

> By mid-August 1962 the Dutch were:
>
> faced by Indonesian armed forces strengthened by Soviet weapons; unsupported by any military alliance with Australia; and seemingly aware that their two NATO allies, the United States and Great Britain, were determined not to burn their fingers in the fire of such an internationally unpopular and, to them, relatively unimportant issue.[2]

Under such conditions the Dutch yielded to Indonesian demands. They signed an agreement with the Indonesians which amounted to an Indonesian takeover of power as from 1 May 1963, following an interim period of seven months under UN supervision. It was under this agreement that Indonesia undertook to hold the 'Act of Free Choice' by the end of 1969. That the Australian Government saw no alternative other than to acquiesce in the wishes of the Indonesians, was succinctly placed in its proper perspective by Grimshaw when he wrote:

> The West New Guinea situation confronted the government with a dilemma which went to the heart of the difficulties of Australian foreign policy - the choice of abandoning its own policy or of attempting to sustain it without the support of its great allies ... the exigencies of great power politics required Australia to accept a distasteful solution to the West New Guinea dispute.[3]

Australia's then Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, defended the government's West New Guinea policy. In doing so, however, he indicated, quite correctly, that Australia had few options in the matter. As he argued in the House of Representatives on 21 August 1962:

> If [either party] should have contemplated a military adventure, it is worth remembering that none of the countries of the West, and particularly of those with whom Australia has the closest association, were at any relevant time willing to maintain a Netherlands administration by military means.[4]

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1 Greenwood, G., "Australian Foreign Policy in Action", p.89.

2 Watt, A., The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, p.256.

3 Grimshaw, C., "Problems of Australian Foreign Policy, January-June 1962", The Australian Journal of Politics and History, Vol.8, No.2, November 1962, p.139 and p.142.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.36, p.517, 21 August 1962.

Marr, in his biography of Barwick, later reflected that:

> West Irian marked the end of the Australian assumption, which had operated since the war, that the United States' support for Australia was somehow automatic. Despite years of friendship, despite the ANZUS treaty, and despite the ties of language and blood, the United States had refused to help and had sided with Indonesia.[1]

Clearly the USA did not view favourably a continued Dutch presence in West New Guinea. Under these circumstances, and with Indonesia adopting an increasingly aggressive 'confrontation' tactic, Australia could not resist American pressures. However, although the policy volte face was due to those pressures, Barwick attempted in the Australian Parliament and at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to play down the negative implications that such a decision could have in terms of West New Guinea's right to self-determination, and stressed the plebiscitary provision of the August 1962 Dutch-Indonesian Agreement.[2]

However, by November 1962, it became clear that Indonesia had a different view, with Indonesian indications that the takeover from the interim UN administration should take place before the agreed date. This led to the Indonesian view, by mid-1965, that there should not be a Papuan act of self-determination at all. Indonesia then:

> imposed a 'political quarantine' on West Irian, banning all except approved political activity, in order to 'eliminate the remnants of colonialism in the province', as the Co-ordinator for West Irian Affairs subsequently put it. Rights of free speech, of movement, or assembly, were, if anything, even more severely curtailed in West Irian than in the rest of Indonesia under Sukarno's guided democracy'. By May 1965, Sukarno also announced that the agreed-to Papuan 'act of free choice' was no longer necessary.[3]

Meanwhile, the fact that the Australian Government still placed great store in the plebiscite was clearly reflected in late November 1962 when Menzies responded to questioning in the House of

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1 Marr, D., Barwick, George Allan Unwin, Sydney, 1980, p.174.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.36, p.517, 21 August 1962. See also extract of his statement to the UNGA in the XVIIth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (New York), 21 September 1962, UN Documents, A/PV.1127, pp.98-99.

3 van der Kroef, J.M., "Australia and West Irian: The Obsequious Silence", Quadrant, Vol.13, 1969, p.73.

Representatives on 'the projected plebiscite of 1969'. In expecting that the Dutch-Indonesian agreement would be adhered to he considered that 'the idea that the plebiscite should be abandoned is one that strikes directly across the whole principle for which this Parliament has stood, and which was acknowledged in the agreement made between the parties and approved by the United Nations'.[1]

However, with 'confrontation' being mounted by Sukarno, Canberra was careful not to provoke Indonesia unduly, especially not over the New Guinea issue. In late 1964 and early 1965, Australia-Indonesia relations came under stress as a result of Sukarno's policy regarding Malaysia. In early 1965, there was speculation in the Australian press that Indonesia's formal withdrawal from the UN would precipitate Indonesian announcements to the effect that it no longer felt bound by the plebiscitary requirement. Such a prospect led to the Opposition Leader, Whitlam, asking External Affairs Minister Hasluck what contingencies the Australian Government had made to ensure that Indonesia would fulfil its undertakings to the United Nations. Although Hasluck stressed that the government still expected the Indonesians to fulfil their obligations, he went on 'to take up one small point':

> The obligation for an act of self-determination in West Irian might perhaps be paraphrased as an obligation to carry out an act of ascertainment. I think 'self-determination' does not mean the holding of some sort of plebiscite or direct consultation with the people in that manner. I am doubtful whether the documents would justify that view. There certainly has to be an act of ascertainment -- some sort of attempt to consult the people -- but the documents are not, perhaps, as strong on the means of self-determination as originally we would have liked them to be.[2]

Throughout this period, the West New Guinea problem brought two important Australian foreign policy principles into conflict. The first centred on the Government's concern with Australia's security and, because of the dominant Australian perception of the importance of the area to Australia's security, that of the island of New Guinea. The second related to promoting good relations with

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.37, p.2707, 29 November 1962.

2 CPD, Vol.45, p.325, 25 March 1965.

the countries of Southeast Asia -- not least, with Indonesia. Until the Subandrio visit in 1959, Australia tried with difficulty to achieve these dual objectives. The quandary -- where the weight of concern with security competed with the object of strengthening the relationship with Indonesia -- gave rise to confusion, and throughout the 1950s there was little certainty about the policy or about what it was likely to be. Moreover, Australia's West New Guinea policy reflected a mistaken assumption about Indonesia's underlying and sustained attitude to its claims on the territory. For Indonesia, West New Guinea:

> exemplified ... the imperialist influences which Sukarno was determined to expunge from Indonesia's environment [this]... was almost certainly reinforced by the recent experience of regional rebellion. Moreover, it could be argued that as long as the Dutch retained control of the territory, a threat would be posed to the integrity of the socially diverse and distended archipelagic state.[1]

The West New Guinea Question and the 'New Order'

The question of self-determination was raised again following Indonesia's return to the UN in 1966.[2] During his trip to Indonesia later that year, Hasluck sought, and was given, an assurance by Foreign Minister Malik that Indonesia recognized the obligation it had incurred under the UN Agreement and intended to comply with it.[3] Malik, however, was driven to reaffirm his assurances in December when the Indonesian Home Affairs Minister, Lt. General Basuki Rachmat, not only put the view that the plebescite would not be held, but also that this was in accordance

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1 Leifer, M., Indonesia's Foreign Policy, p.61.

2 For an account of the rising tensions within WNG, and of foreign press accounts, see van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, pp.129-132.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol. 53, p.2380, 28 October 1966. In February 1966, before the emergence of the 'New Order', the Secretary Coordinator for West Irian Affairs, Dr Legowo, announced that the proclamation of Indonesia's independence on August 1945 signified the inclusion of West Irian in the Republic of Indonesia and that, consequently, the question of the 'act of ascertainment of the wishes of the people of West Irian did not arise'. The Sydney Morning Herald, 4 February 1966.

with the wishes of the people themselves.[1] Within days of Malik counter-announcing that the 1962 Agreement would be adhered to, the Provincial Council of West New Guinea adopted a resolution rejecting a plebiscite.[2]

This gave rise to international concern that effective control over the territory's representative institutions or spokesmen would continue to prevent an untrammeled expression of Papuan opinion. However, in the following months Indonesian officials reiterated that the Papuans would be given a chance to express their political wishes, although a strong degree of ambiguity began to emerge in Indonesian pronouncements. The chief Indonesian delegate to the UN, Ruslan Abdulgani, said in early 1967 that although the inhabitants of West Irian would be permitted to decide whether or not they wished to remain in Indonesia, the agreement did not provide for a 'referendum' in the territory, only that 'the wishes of the people be heard'.[3] This stand was fortified by Indonesia's Ambassador to Australia, Major-General Kosasih, when, at a Press Conference in Port Moresby in mid-April, he argued that while Indonesia would 'fulfil every agreement made with other countries under the United Nations' regarding the West New Guinea question, the word 'plebiscite' did not appear in the original agreement.[4]

Nonetheless, Malik pressured Suharto to agree to carry out the act at a time when the fledgling government was vulnerable to the pro-nationalist stance adopted by Sukarno so successfully in the 1950s and early 1960s.[5] In domestic terms, the West New Guinea

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 23 December 1966.

2 Ibid. The Provincial Council of West New Guinea was a proto-legislative body; its membership had been reconstituted under Indonesian supervision during the 1963-64 period.

3 The Straits Times, 7 January 1967.

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 April 1967.

5 van der Kroef argued that the domestic context provided some of the answers. van der Kroef's thesis centred on Suharto's political position and 'the long time volatility of the West New Guinea issue in domestic Indonesian politics', and his tactic to follow a Sukarnoist philosophy that had worked so successfully -- vis-a-vis China and his own domestic position. It is certainly plausible that certain elements of the new Suharto government especially from the military

question, if not handled properly, could be used by Suharto's critics to topple him. Hence, for Malik, vacillation would only contribute to this prospect. However, Malik's other, and perhaps more powerful argument centred on the international dimension of the West New Guinea question and Indonesia's thirst for international respectability. This search was based on the restoration of economic stability which itself was based on an agreement for assistance. Malik and Suharto were compelled, therefore, to elevate arguments for international respectability above the domestic constraints, and go along with the 'Act of Free Choice'.

In addition, there was the continued but subtle pressures being applied by Australian Government leaders. A case in point was Hasluck, who assured the House of Representatives towards the middle of 1967 that Indonesia would honour its obligations under the treaty. Moreover:

> We have to accept, and we do accept, those statements at their face value and place our confidence in the good faith of the Indonesian Government by accepting that it will carry out its obligations under the treaty. So far as I am aware, the exact procedures that will be followed in making this act of ascertainment have not been declared plainly by the Indonesian Government.[1]

Debate on the West New Guinea question continued in a state of flux for the remainder of 1967 and most of 1968. In fact, it was not until November 1968 that the matter of West New Guinea's self-determination was again under the scrutiny of the Australian Government. It was also clear at this time that Suharto had been convinced that the 'Act of Free Choice' should go ahead.

In response to a question that called for an explanation for the role of the UN in the plebiscite, Hasluck propounded the view that the 'responsibility' of the plebiscite rested upon 'the Secretary General of the United Nations', and that he sustained 'reasonable confidence' that the 'Act of Free Choice' would be carried out.[2] In the event, on 26 February 1969, the Indonesian

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wing of the government, favoured ignoring the 'Act of Free Choice'. van der Kroef, J.M., Indonesia Since Sukarno, p.135.

1 CPD, H.R., Vol.55, p.2138, 16 May 1967.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.61, p.3022, 20 November 1968.

Deputy Foreign Minister for West Irian Affairs, Sudjarwo Tjondronegoro announced a process to implement the 'Act of Free Choice'.[1]

There were two elements to the procedures which he envisaged. Essentially, the method of ascertainment would be through consultation (musyawarah) between the Indonesian Government and appointed 'tribal' leaders. Broadly speaking, special consultative assemblies would be formed in each of the eight regencies (Kabupaten) of West Irian. One delegate for every 750 persons in the regency -- with populations that vary from 35 000 to 165 000 people -- would constitute these assemblies. However, they were not elected. Instead, they were made up of Indonesian appointed members of legislative councils in each regency, supplemented by tribal chiefs, persons chosen by those groups themselves and representatives from lower districts.[2] Although the second element

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1 In the preceding months Indonesian officials went to great lengths to secure the UN's blessing for the proposal. Particularly active was the Special Assistant to the Foreign Minister (Sudjarwo Tjondronegoro), who, in June 1968, had obtained in New York, an 'understanding' that the impending 'Act of Free Choice' was Indonesia's 'sole responsibility'. By January 1969 (in both New York and The Hague), the Special Assistant had obtained approval for Indonesia's system for the 'Act of Free Choice'. See GAOR, Twenty-fourth Session (1969), Annexes, A/7723, Report of the Secretary-General regarding the act of self-determination in West Irian, Annex II, "Report of the Indonesian Government to the Secretary-General concerning the conduct and results of the act of free choice in West Irian, pursuant to article XXI of the New York Agreement of 1962" (hereafter Annex II, A/7723), p.23 and p.26.

2 van der Kroef, J.M., "Australia and the West Irian Problem", Asian Survey, VX, No.6, June 1970, p.484. Initial consultations with the representative councils of the eight regencies took place between 22 March and 12 April 1969. While teams of UN observers were present at these sessions (including Ortiz), they had no role in any preparations for the election of the membership of the consultative assemblies. This task lay essentially with the committees of the existing representative councils. Moreover, the UN observer team was present at the election of only 195 members (out of 1 026) of the consultative assemblies. See GAOR, Twenty-fourth Session (1969), Annexes, A/7723, Report of the Secretary-General regarding the act of self-determination in West Irian, Annex I, "Report by the Representative of the Secretary-General in West Irian, submitted under Article XXI. paragraph 1, of the Agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands concerning West New Guinea (West Irian)"

of the procedure involved a separate deliberation of these assemblies, followed by mutual discussion to reach the goal of consensus (mufakat) as to whether or not to remain under Indonesian control,[1] on the evidence van der Kroef considered 'there was no voting, and the Indonesians exercised a controlling supervisory influence.'[2] So, between 14 July and 2 August 1969 the collective membership of the eight assemblies -- 1 026 persons -- would decide the fate of 750 000 Papuans in West Irian (this is examined in detail later).

If Hasluck's statement to the House of Representatives in November 1968 reflected a policy not to be involved in any opposition to the method by which Indonesia chose to comply with the 1962 Agreement, then his successor, Gordon Freeth, further defended that procedure in February 1969. In a speech to a Young Liberals' Convention, Freeth put the view that while a plebiscite seemed 'the perfectly normal way to determine the wishes of the people' this was not particularly the case for the Indonesian people. For Freeth:

> the state of advancement of many indigenous people of West Irian is fairly primitive, [and]... they would barely understand what an act of self-determination was. So there are real difficulties if you try to adapt this one man, one vote idea of getting an intelligent decision from people. The Indonesians have a system of consultation and consensus in their own country which they have lived by for centuries. I think the rest of the world has to understand the great store the Indonesians set by this kind of process.[3]

The Australian Government's position had certainly come some distance from Spender's 'vital interest' arguments and Casey's attempt to put the question of West New Guinea into 'cold storage'. However, Barwick's subsequent defence of the 1962 Agreement -- and

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(hereafter Annex I, A/7723), pp.13-14.

1 For a background to this question see Hastings, P., "West Irian -1969", p.12 ff.

2 van der Kroef, J.M., "Australia and the West Irian Problem", p.484.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 February 1969. For strong criticism of this line, see Mortimer, M., "The New Guinea Race", Contemporary Review, June 1969, pp.324-325.

the proposition 'that the indigenous people should have their choice of their future'[1] -- had fallen away to Hasluck's belief that 'some sort of attempt to consult' the West Irianese only should be made, and this marked a course towards a new Australian realism. Nonetheless, underlying this pragmatism was evidence that Australian doubts about the validity of an act of self-determination were surfacing at a time when the staging of any act of self-determination in West Irian was being put increasingly in doubt by Indonesian policies. Freeth's refusal to reflect on Jakarta's form of consultation was the inevitable culmination of this process of reappraisal. But while the force majeure argument inherent in policy statements of the late 1960s, which were related directly to Australia's own national interests, may have been compelling, these policies were not without criticism, which came from many other quarters.[2]

At the international level, dissatisfaction was expressed by the UN's representative, Dr Frans Ortiz Sanz.[3] In a report to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in November 1969, Dr Ortiz recorded Indonesia's rejection of the one man, one vote system in the 'Act of Free Choice'; and of his suggestion that he had a role to play in informing the people on the method of collective consultations in circumstances where the one man, one vote notion was not applicable.[4] Added criticism came from the Dutch Foreign Minister, Dr Luns, who was compelled to say that the procedure seemed to be 'a very one sided voting exercise',[5] and in consultations with Malik in Rome, in May 1969, he addressed 'the course of events' taking place in West New Guinea.[6]

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.36, p.516, 21 August 1962.

2 van der Kroef, J.M., "Australia and the West Irian Problem", p.485.

3 Ortiz, a Bolivian, was appointed on 1 April 1968 as Secretary-General Thant's representative to participate in arrangements for the 'Act of Free Choice'. For biographical details see the Sydney Morning Herald, 28 May 1969.

4 Annex I, A/7723, p.9.

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 15 March 1969.

6 Annex II, A/7723, p.30.

At the regional and domestic levels, West Irianese, granted permissive residence in West New Guinea, were critical of the 'musyawarah' concept, and demanded that coastal areas in West Irian be permitted to exercise their act of free choice on a one man, one vote basis.[1] Meanwhile, on 21 May 1969, thirteen members of the Papua New Guinea House of Assembly were critical that Indonesia should conduct the 'Act of Free Choice'. This action brought down a rebuke from Barnes, the Australian External Territories Minister, who pointed out that the 'Act of Free Choice' was not a matter to concern the House of Assembly and that the territory's international relations were in any case, the province of the Australian Parliament.[2]

The Australian press was especially critical, some attacking Indonesian policies in particular,[3] while others were critical of Freeth. The Age, for instance, found the selection of a handful of tribal and district leaders to speak on behalf of the West Irianese population quite cynical, and considered the Australian Government's stand, unnecessarily justified by the responsible Minister, as:

> a new example of what used to be called the 'Koala Line' [which] suggests that Australian foreign policy is so dominated by terror of our neighbours. We are so anxious to be cuddled that we overlook the bombing and machine gunning of Papuan rebels in Irian and leap to the defence of Indonesia for not carrying out a common-roll election... the most fitting comment we could make would be complete silence. There are times when silence can be maladroit... There are other times when it can be preferable to hypocrisy.[4]

Others saw Freeth as elevating the gains from good post-1965 relations with Indonesia above the risks associated with having an

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 15 March 1969. Mortimer considered such a vote would prove embarrassing to the Indonesians as the coastal majority was strongly anti-Indonesian following 'years of neglect, corruption, broken promises, and suppression in the form of bombing, beating and shooting'. Mortimer, R., "The New Guinea Race", pp.324-325.

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 and 23 July 1969.

3 The Australian, 14 January 1969.

4 The Age, 21 February 1969.

independent but economically weak West New Guinea to our north, even though a one man, one vote system would be universally preferable to the method chosen by Indonesia.[1]

At a press conference in April 1969, Freeth responded to such criticism with the observation that Indonesians had been conditioned from 1948 onwards to believe that West Irian belonged to them and that the issue was still a highly emotive one in Indonesia. He further argued:

> The present government has inherited this legacy. They have got to exercise a fair amount of political skill in Indonesia itself and statements made in Indonesia for home consumption are probably comparable to statements made by some newspaper editors in Australia ... and you'd [sic] place as much reliance on them in Indonesia from inside as I hope the Indonesians place on some of our editorials. We, I think, have got to show that we understand the present difficulties of the Indonesian Government and the fact that they are genuinely complying in their own way with the New York Agreement.[2]

The strong element of realpolitik in this statement stood in sharp contrast to the moral considerations which the press argued should have been paramount. However, the latter was able to adopt its highly moral position precisely for the reason that it was unwilling to concede that, realpolitik considerations aside, there was very little for Australia to protest about.

Freeth laid the foundations for this interpretation in the House of Representatives in February when he said that while Indonesia was obligated to go through with the 'Act of Free Choice', no method was laid down for it in the New York Agreement.[3] With the debate widening to the Senate, the Government stressed that, notwithstanding this lack of guidance in the Agreement, Indonesia had responded promptly and positively to Dr. Sanz's recommendations for a one man, one vote system; in any event, the whole process 'was properly in the hands of the Indonesian Government, and the Secretary-General and his representative in accordance with the provisions of the 1962 agreement between

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1 See, for example, the Sydney Morning Herald, 19 February 1969.

2 CNIA, Vol.40, No.4, April 1969, pp.160-161.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.67, p.156, 25 February 1969.

Indonesia and the Netherlands'.[1] Clearly, Freeth was fortifying in the Parliament his intention, established in February, not to be drawn into a controversy over West Irian. As far as he was concerned, by late March:

> [UN] supervision is being provided. The agreement does not specify the way in which the act of self-determination is to be carried out. It contains no reference to a vote as such. So far as we are aware the Government of Indonesia is meeting its obligations under the agreement ... So far as we know they are being carried out.[2]

Towards the end of April, Freeth visited Jakarta. Ostensibly, the trip was to enable Australia and Indonesia to hold discussions on big power involvement in the Indian Ocean, and the implications for the two countries of the planned British withdrawal. On West Irian and Indonesia's plans he was to declare that 'we can understand the difficulties of applying ... one man, one vote. We understand that this would be impossible'.[3] Moreover, he endorsed the Indonesian's handling of the situation as 'sound',[4] and stressed that as long as Indonesia carried out the Act 'honourably' in compliance with the New York Agreement, then Australia could not criticise it.[5]

However, within two weeks of his return, Freeth adopted a more qualified position, denying at a National Press Club luncheon in Canberra that he had approved the 'Act of Free Choice' planned by the Indonesians. Freeth was careful to record that while the Australian Government recognized Indonesia's system of musjawarah, it did not imply any commitment or approval of how such a process was to be applied when the act of self-determination took place in the middle of the year. Moreover, and in what was clearly an attitude that contrasted with his views in Jakarta, Freeth expressed the view that the practice and functions of diplomacy had guided Australia's attitude towards Indonesia in the past and that

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1 Ibid., Senate, Vol.40, 18 March 1969, p.386.

2 Ibid., H.R., Vol.62, p.818, 25 March 1969.

3 The Age, 28 April 1969.

4 The Australian, 28 April 1969.

5 The Age, 28 April 1969.

'this continues to be our approach today.'[1]

This drew a great deal of criticism from the floor of the Press Club, with questions focusing on Freeth's 'expressed approval' of the 'Act of Free Choice', variously described as representing 'hard-headed pragmatism' and 'political expediency'. However, Freeth maintained that to understand what was taking place in West New Guinea was not to mean approval:

> The Australian Government recognizes the system of musjawarah which is an age-old process of consultation ... That doesn't imply any commitment or approval of how that process is going to be applied ... I merely expressed the view that we understand the process they are about to apply.[2]

While it was clear Freeth was trying to fortify the government's position in the face of emerging public criticisms of their policies, the rationale behind Freeth's new circumspection grew from three areas: incursions into Australian New Guinea by the Indonesian military on April 26; the growing problem of Papuan border crossers from West Irian; and dissension within the Australian Cabinet over policies toward Indonesia. For Freeth, the border incursions, whilst not comparable to the issues Australia faced during confrontation, carried the seeds of potential disharmony between the two countries. Moreover, and perhaps in direct reference to the conflict within Cabinet,[3] if Australia were to be 'too heavy-handed, these seeds could quite easily grow to critical size.'[4]

This criticism was also evident in the Australian Parliament. In the Senate, Senator Georges, promptly upon Freeth's return from Jakarta in April, provocatively questioned whether the government's actions were intended to 'placate Indonesia' and whether Australia

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1 CNIA, Vol.40, No.5, May 1969, p.240.

2 Ibid., P.242.

3 The main protagonists here were the Minister for External Territories, Barnes, who advocated a tougher line with Jakarta, and Freeth, whose critics were beginning to find his attitude all too accommodating towards Indonesia. This conflict reflected Australia's post-1962 problems of maintaining a pragmatic ambivalence in its policies toward the West New Guinea question.

4 The Australian, 17 May 1969.

was 'as subservient to Indonesia as it is to America in matters of foreign policy.'[1] Events in the Parliament throughout May reached a point where, in an adjournment debate on 29 May, Freeth felt he was compelled to 'bring [Members] back to a sense of reality in this matter.'[2] Moreover, 'in the interests of maintaining good relations with a large neighbour we should at least give the Indonesians the benefit of the doubt and await events as they turn out'.[3] Freeth continued this line, in the face of rising criticism, into the months preceding the West New Guinea plebiscite (14 July - 2 August 1969), sustaining the view that Australia had to make allowances for Indonesia's conduct of the plebiscite, just as Indonesia, in view of the place of West New Guinea in its history, had made allowances in conducting the Act at all.[4]

Whatever the wisdom of his pragmatism, two interrelated factors were instrumental in shaping Freeth's inflexible policy position, and the groundswell of criticisms. The first centred on the West New Guinea Papuan refugees and border crossers and the second related to the effect this had on opinion, both public and official, in Australian New Guinea, more particularly in terms of Pan-Papuanism. Such factors[5] were to deepen the Australian Government's dilemma for, as Hastings observed in early 1969, the border crossers were not only destabilizing 'relations with Indonesia ... their comings and goings were also bedeviling relations, surely but slowly within New Guinea itself.'[6]

Refugees or Border Crossers?

From 1965 there was an increase in the movement of border-crossers from West New Guinea into Papua New Guinea. The Australian Government responded to this quandary, and to problems

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1 CPD, Senate, Vol.41, 29 April 1969, p.1020.

2 Ibid., H.R., Vol.63, p.2554, 29 - 30 May 1969.

3 Ibid., p.2555.

4 Text of television interview of 15 July in Perth, Western Australia, in CNIA, Vol.40, No.7, July 1969, pp.398-399.

5 It is intended only to examine the refugee and border crosser issues.

6 The Australian, 28 March 1969.

in West New Guinea generally, by playing it down, and adopting a hard policy line on crossers -- even the once tolerated traditional crossers. Throughout the next four years the issues to emerge related to the political and economic grievances of the crossers and whether any anti-Indonesian activities were based in Australian New Guinea. These issues gave rise to a number of border incidents of potentially serious proportions, as well as the creation of liaison arrangements between Australia and Indonesia to resolve them.

Under the Dutch administration, border crossings were few and, therefore, not a political problem.[1] However, between 1963 when the Indonesians formally took over West New Guinea[2] and the end of 1966, when the anti-Indonesian Papuan resistance began to take form, nearly 600 West Irianese had crossed into Australian territory.[3] In 1967 there were 866, in 1968, another 801, and a further 350 by May 1969, when Indonesia's Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, charged that there were 'indications' that Papuan refugees in Australian territory, near the border, were being trained for subversion in West Irian.[4]

Initial Australian and Indonesian responses tended to emphasize the accidental nature of the crossings. At first, the Australian Government tended to portray them as traditional movements, inducing the West Papuans to return to West New Guinea, whilst granting permissive residence to a small number who sought asylum on humanitarian grounds. In the words of Hasluck in mid-1967:

> The reason for most of these movements [in 1963] was that it had been customary for people to move backwards and

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1 van der Kroef, J.M., "Australia and the West Irian Problem," p.492.

2 May, R.J., "Living With A Lion. Public Attitudes and Private Feelings", in May, R.J., (ed.), The Indonesian-Papua New Guinea Border, p.81. May considered that the inflow of West Papuan nationalists into Papua New Guinea following the transfer was 'immediate'.

3 See Nyamekye, Kwasi and Premdas, R.P., "Papua New Guinea Perceptions on the Border; Internal Pressures and Policies" in May, Ron, (ed.), The Indonesia-Papua New Guinea Border, p.66.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.63, p.2315, 28 May 1969.

> forwards in this country, and it was not until the meaning of an international border was explained to them, with some patience and care, by both the Indonesian authorities and the Australian administrative authorities, that they became aware there was a border.[1]

However, such movement across the border into Australian New Guinea intensified with the upsurge of indigenous resistance in West New Guinea to Indonesian rule. This coincided with the pursuit of Irianese across the border by Indonesian military patrols, the cause of many incidents. Yet as Verrier pointed out:

> Along with the troubles in West New Guinea as a whole, the Australian Government played this down [and], from 1967, to avoid embarrassing Indonesia, took a tougher line on border crossings even of the traditional kind which had been tolerated in the past.[2]

In the face of mounting opinion in Australia, arising from the announcement of the 'Act of Free Choice', Hasluck was compelled to again insist that the border-crossings amounted only to traditional family and tribal movements, and put the view that such crossings 'had no connection with political developments in West Irian'.[3] Meanwhile the Indonesians were arguing that many of these Irianese did not know exactly the location of the borders separating their own territory from those under Australian administration. They stressed particularly that those Irianese who did leave West Irian for the Australian controlled areas must have done so for no reason other than economic.[4] Whether the crossings were due to custom, economic or, as Hasluck pointed out, employment reasons, he gave assurance that if the Irianese were to lay a claim for political asylum, then it would be carefully considered.[5]

On 26 April 1969, the new Foreign Minister, Gordon Freeth continued the stand of his predecessors with the view that,

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1 Ibid., Vol.55, p.1579, 2 May 1967.

2 Verrier, J.R., Australia, Papua New Guinea and the West New Guinea Question 1949-69, Ph.D. thesis, Department of Politics, Monash University, 1976, pp. 366-367, quoted in May, R.J., "Living with a Lion. Public Attitudes and Private Feelings" in May, Ron, (ed.), The Indonesia-Papua New Guinea Border, p.81.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.60, p.443, 22 August 1968.

4 Antara, 2 July 1968.

5 CPD, H.R., Vol.60, p.443, 22 August 1968.

although he recognized that the activities of border-crossers had intensified, they were 'not likely to be political troublemakers' and arrangements with the Indonesian Government about them had 'been worked out very satisfactorily'.[1] Yet, this seemed at odds with the views that were emerging in official circles in Papua New Guinea. In late 1968, close scrutiny in the House of Assembly of the Administration's border policy gave rise to the admission by the secretary for law that not only was there an escalation in the number of camps on the Papua New Guinea side of the border, but also that they were cells with the potential for political activity. This prompted the administration to instruct the refugees that they should return to Indonesian territory.[2]

On the day Freeth made this statement, 79 West Irianese refugees crossed from West Irian into Australian New Guinea (West Sepik district) with armed uniformed Indonesians bearing down on them. External Territories Minister Barnes confirmed, in the House of Representatives on 30 April, that the small group of Indonesians had entered Australian Papua New Guinea at Wutung, a small village on the New Guinea coast, and within a few hundred yards of the border. During the incursion, shots were fired at the Officer-in-Charge of Wutung patrol post, Mr A. Try, two native constables and the station interpreter. In accounting for these events Barnes was quick to point out that not only had police reinforcements been sent to the area but strong representations had been made to the Indonesian Government and that they had given assurances that this would not occur again.[3] Yet, five hours before, Freeth had told a press conference in Canberra upon his return from Indonesia that no formal complaint to the Indonesian Government over the shooting had been lodged. He confirmed that he had discussed the matter with Foreign Minister Malik who had reportedly 'expressed regret and stated that no similar occurrences would occur again'. Freeth also revealed that the Indonesian authorities would not only allow West Irian refugees to cross the border into Australian New Guinea but also indicated a desire to improve communications between the two countries on the movement of

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1 Jakarta Times, 29 April 1969.

2 May, R.J., "Living With a Lion", pp.83-84.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.63, 30 April 1969, pp.1490-1491.

West Irianese.[1]

Clearly, these events revealed three things. First, Freeth had known of the incident while in Jakarta, and, in line with his accommodating policy at this time of the 'Act of Free Choice', declined the option to lodge an official Australian protest. Second, the two Ministers were at odds. Barnes' confirmation that diplomatic representations were made to Indonesia was not borne out by Freeth's description of his talks in Jakarta. Although Malik had cooperated fully in attempts to move towards smoothing down the incident and its implications, it was not clear why the Department of External Territories had not released details of the incident in the first place (this would have cleared the air and saved the atmosphere of mystery and confusion that followed).

Third, in revealing Indonesia's intention to allow 'refugees'[2] to cross the border into Papua New Guinea, and to improve communications to accommodate this, Freeth was indicating a reversal of Indonesian policy. Moreover, if such a policy was agreed upon by Freeth on behalf of the Australian Government (which seemed likely), it indicated an entirely new approach towards Indonesia by Australia, which had formerly allowed as few West Irian refugees into Papua New Guinea as possible. While this reflected a policy of deference to Indonesian wishes (and, in fact, to strained Australian facilities), it seemed more than evident that Barnes knew little of these policy developments. Barnes was concerned with the effect of the incident on Papuan opinion in Eastern New Guinea and reportedly wished to pursue a much harder line with the Indonesians. However, at the time when Freeth gave his Press conference, he had not seen Barnes and therefore it was more than likely Barnes was presented with a highly important new policy on which the External Territories Minister had not been previously consulted.

In critically examining Australia's West New Guinea policy, the incident's most serious after-effects were not to be considered only in terms of Australian-Indonesian relations,[3] but in

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1 The Australian, 1 May 1969.

2 Freeth, quoted in the Australian, 1 May 1969.

3 In view of the arguments that had been posited over the years about the refugees/border-crossers, and their

little-disguised differences between Freeth and Barnes. That there was a clash of interests, if not a considerable overlap in their respective responsibilities, was evidenced by their respective conduct. While Freeth expressed concern that Indonesian and Australian interests clearly lay in a low-key response to the Wutung affair, Barnes argued for a tougher line on Australia's part. Thus, he must have been dismayed to have heard Freeth's views and policy on West Irian refugees. Although the Indonesians did not propose to stop would-be refugees, and Freeth raised no objections to such a policy (implying that there would be no impediment on our side of the border either), the New Guinea administration, until this point, had followed a tacit policy of discouraging refugees -- specifically at the request of the Department of External Affairs.[1]

Within three weeks of the first incident, and two days of Freeth's more qualified position on the 'Act of Free Choice' (at the National Press Club on 16 May), a second encounter took place and became known as the Kwari incident. On 18 May 1969, in the Western district 15 armed and uniformed Indonesians raided a camp occupied by 250 West Irianese who had been living there for more than two months. The camp was near the Western District village of Kwari and twelve miles inside Australian territory. Two refugees from the camp reached an Unevangelised Field Mission at Suki, 45 miles east of Kwari to tell of their plight and that of the refugees, whereupon the Director of District Administration, Tom

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potential to destabilize the area, it seemed certain that a sudden influx of refugees, as a result of the softer policy positions taken by Australia and Indonesia, would present considerable technical problems, particularly if such refugees attempted 'to spread rabid anti-Indonesian, pro-West Irian propaganda' (the Australian, 1 May 1969).

1 The government leader in the Senate, Senator Anderson, denied that there was conflict between the two Ministers' departments. In response to a question from Senator Georges (ALP, Qld), Anderson blamed the press for playing up the fact that there were differences in approaches over the border incidents. CPD, Senate, Vol.41, p.1141, 1 May 1969. See also ibid.: p.1412, 21 May 1969. Further, in response to a query from Senator Cavanagh (ALP, SA) Anderson confirmed that Malik and Freeth had agreed to steps which would prevent a repetition of the incidents. Anderson evaded Cavanagh's persistent interjections as to whether or not Australia had made 'any strong protests to Indonesia' (CPD, H.R., Vol.62, pp.1142-1143, 1 May 1969).

Ellis, dispatched three helicopters to the site, with 14 police and District Officer, Arthur Marks, to search for evidence of the refugees' claims.[1]

In a public statement of support for the raid on 26 May, Foreign Minister Malik alleged that West Irianese were being trained in these camps for subversion, and queried whether the camp in question was 'a camp to infiltrate the area, or a camp for sabotage of West Irian?' Although he thought that it was 'a good gesture' if the camps were used for the rehabilitation of West Irian refugees, with a view to returning them to Indonesia, Malik added the following day:

> Indonesia would be grateful if ... Australia would prevent the existence in the area of the camps if they were used for training West Irianese refugees. This would be necessary for the task of a good neighbour policy.[2]

In Canberra, on the evening of the same day, External Territories Minister Barnes indicated that he had not seen any evidence to suggest that the West Irianese had established training camps on the Australian side of the border. Freeth was prompted by questions from the press to announce, within a month of his assurances in Jakarta that all was well on the border, that a liaison officer from Papua New Guinea (a senior officer of the Territory Administration in Port Moresby) would be sent to Jayapura in an effort to prevent further border incidents.[3] Freeth also revealed that a First Secretary of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, J.M.C. Watson, had gone to West Irian in connection with the first border incident. It was expected that the two Australian officials would be in West Irian at the same time, with Watson 'have[ing] a look around and record[ing] his own impressions'.[4]

Yet, Freeth, generally, did not go beyond that, except to say, 'the government did not take strong views until reports were

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 26 May 1969.

2 Ibid., the Age, 28 1969.

3 Ibid.

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 29 May 1969.

verified'.[1] Maintaining a close and tactful silence following earlier contradictions between himself and Barnes over the first incident, it was not until the following day that Freeth revealed the Australian Government's response to Malik's allegations regarding the camps. The West Irianese who had left Indonesian territory were, he stated, stationed at Yoke, awaiting consideration of their application for permissive residence. He denied they were engaged in any training involving the use of military weapons or sabotage.[2] However, he added that the government would develop a clear understanding of events on the border only when investigations had been completed.[3]

Meanwhile, Freeth had instructed Australia's Ambassador in Indonesia, Gordon Jockel, to meet with Malik and assure him that there were no such refugee training camps on the Australian side of the border.[4] In a discussion held on 30 May at the Foreign Affairs Department in Jakarta, Jockel reaffirmed that the purpose of the camps in Papua New Guinea was simply to house the refugees who, when rested, would be sent back across the border.[5] Pleased with these assurances, Malik was quoted as saying, 'I would regard the border incidents as over'.[6]

Yet, it was to emerge the following week that on 29 May, the day before Jockel's meeting with Malik, and despite assurances from Freeth and Malik, another Indonesian patrol was involved in an incident with a group of West Irianese, six miles inside Australian territory.[7] Although it was reported on 4 June by the Sydney

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1 The Age, 28 May 1969.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.63, P.2315, 28 May 1969. See also the Age, 29 May 1969.

3 This view was endorsed by Anderson, the government leader in the Senate, in response to a question by Senator J.M. Wheeldon (ALP, WA). Anderson indicated that an effort was being made by the government 'to get some greater precision' in the reports on the incident (the Sydney Morning Herald, 29 May 1969).

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 31 May 1969.

5 Indonesian Herald, 31 May 1969.

6 The Sydney Morning Herald, 31 May 1969.

7 The Sydney Morning Herald, 6 June 1969.

Morning Herald that administration patrols had discovered 280 West Irianese in West Irian as well as three bodies in a creek,[1] it was assumed that their presence was due to the incident of 18 May. It was not until Thursday 5 June that it was established as fact that there had been a third incident.[2] Moreover, in confirming the details in a subsequent report, the Coroner in Port Moresby, Max Allwood, stressed that the Indonesian patrol had continued to search Australian territory for other border-crossers for two days after the shooting.[3] As this incident brought down heavy criticism in Port Moresby and Australia,[4] both Canberra and Jakarta moved swiftly to downplay these incidents.

While Ambassador Jockel was instructed to inform Malik that the Australian Government held the strong view that the Indonesian military must not intrude into Australian territory[5], his

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 4 June 1969.

2 District Officer Marks, who was despatched on 26 May, was shot at by a group of Indonesians. Marks, leading a patrol, had been walking along a bush track while six West Irianese paddled the canoe with Marks' baggage. During the day, the canoe had been secured and the party was resting on the bank. It was then that the Indonesians surprised the group. Three of the men later made their way to Kwari Camp, two bodies were subsequently found by a helicopter crew, and the third was reported to a patrol several days later. This was confirmed in an interview with R.W. Blaikie, at the time a District Inspector in the Department of District Administration (Brisbane, March 1986).

van der Kroef was to observe that over 250 refugees were located living in six scattered camps near Kwari, with some of the refugees claiming to have fought against Indonesian troops before crossing the border (van der Kroef, J.M., "Australia and West Irian", p.493). The Sydney Morning Herald, in a report on the incident, established that the administration had confirmed they had been found in a 16 square-mile area south of Kwari, and that 'there were 92 men, 48 women and the rest were children' (the Sydney Morning Herald, 8 June 1969).

3 The Canberra Times, 7 June 1969.

4 During a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meeting in Sydney, Eba Oleavale, a member of the Territory House of Assembly, accused the Indonesians of 'a deliberate infringement' on the border, arguing as the border area was clearly marked, it was improbable that they crossed into Australian territory unwittingly (the Sydney Morning Herald, 6 June 1969).

5 The Times (Jakarta), 7 June 1969.

instructions did not extend to a formal protest. In response, Malik put the view that while Indonesia would take every step to prevent further border incidents, such incidents should not be exaggerated as a 'wrong presentation of the facts may make things difficult to solve'.[1] Freeth attempted to put events into some kind of perspective when he suggested the following week that the incidents were 'pretty minor', and that, 'It is no use endangering our relations with the Indonesian government when all the indications are that they think the same way as we do on the border'.[2]

The judgement underpinning Australia's West New Guinea policy throughout this period was that good relations with Indonesia were paramount. Moreover, as Indonesia had clearly stated, under both Sukarno and Suharto, that it did not envisage any course for the territory other than integration, the Australian Government was not prepared to alienate the 'New Order' leadership for what was clearly a lost cause. But Australia's policy was constantly plagued by faulty representations by government spokespersons as they sought to turn the government's critics' arguments back against them. In the final analysis, the Australian Government's main problem at this point was no longer relations with Indonesia but with the Australian public (this is extended later).

Two further points should be made. First, the root of Australia's West New Guinea policy went back to the late 1950s -- and a time when the dispute over West New Guinea had exposed an unrealized degree of Australia's political and geographic isolation -- and it was implied in government statements ever since that the territory's integration with Indonesia was merely the end of an historical process. Second, unlike the earlier Sukarno period, the conservative government in Australia fully understood Indonesia's

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1 The Canberra Times, 7 June 1969.

2 Indonesian Times, 18 June 1969. Meanwhile, talks between senior Indonesian and Australian officials on these border problems had commenced on 10 June in Jayapura, and were intended 'to try to improve liaison between the two sides of the border as the refugee problem threatens good relations between Indonesia and Australia' (the Times, 7 June 1969. See also the Age, 9 June 1969). For a detailed analysis and criticism of Australia's self-interest in establishing this border liaison see Verrier, J.R., Australia, Papua New Guinea and the West New Guinea Question 1949-69, p.346.

attitude to the former colony and its determination to obtain it. In this context, the principle of self-determination was deemed by Indonesia, as we noted in Chapter One,[1] to be secondary to the priority of ensuring the integrity of the Republic.

The 'Act of Free Choice'

In the period of 14 July to 2 August 1969, the Indonesian Government conducted the 'Act of Free Choice'. The Pepera (an acronym for Penentuan Pendapat Rakjat), as it came to be called, was conducted, in compliance with the New York Agreement in the main centres of West Irian's eight administrative districts -- Merauke, Wamena, Nabire, Fak Fak, Sorong, Manokwari, the island of Biak, and the West Irian capital of Jayapura. While some isolated demonstrations had erupted in some of the centres during the preceding months,[2] it seemed inevitable that the vote by the Consultative Assemblies would be to remain with Indonesia. Thus the real question for the Indonesians centred on the degree to which the vote would be affirmative, and this involved two sets of uncertainties. The first related to the actual conduct of the plebiscite, and the second centred on the UN Representatives' report to the Secretary-General, U Thant, following the Act.

There seemed little doubt that, apart from the most sophisticated of West Irianese in the coastal towns and the more primitive highlands, where the West Irianese would probably not understand the nature of the question being asked, the majority would vote to stay with Indonesia. Nevertheless, the Indonesians were concerned with the uncertainty of the Act being held publicly and with the methods of election to the Consultative Assemblies. As a large part of the initial selection was done by the largely Papuan field staff, in consultation with various representative groups, there was an air of uncertainty over the true nature of feelings among those selected. The problem, therefore, was not so much that the West Irianese would vote for severance, but that

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1 See pp.22-23 and p.53, Chapter One.

2 In his final report, Ortiz noted that there were outbreaks of violence in the Manokwari Regency (in particular), in the towns of Waghete and Enarotali, and due to border crossings into East New Guinea, along the eastern border with the Australian-administered territories of Papua and New Guinea. Annex I, A/7723, pp.14-16.

Indonesian sovereignty would not be given full acclamation.[1]

The second uncertainty grew out of U Thant's refusal of an Indonesian request that Dr F. Ortiz Sanz's report be either subsumed as a supplementary report to the Secretary-General's annual report or disseminated with Indonesia's own report as joint documentation. Such suggestions by Dr Sudjarwo, the Indonesian diplomat in charge of ensuring a smooth functioning of the Act, were not acceptable. This meant that both Sanz's report and an Indonesian Government report would be forwarded separately to the UN General Assembly under a covering memorandum.

Nevertheless, the Pepera commenced on schedule with the first Act being held in Merauke on 15 July 1969. In what was described later as 'a clever exercise in the fascinating Indonesian style of mass politics',[2] the Act followed its pre-ordained course: on 15 July, Merauke's 175 tribal delegates decided unanimously that the regency remain part of Indonesia. The previous night of colour and fanfare set the tone for well orchestrated proceedings. Merauke was full of Indonesians, including the Minister for Home Affairs, Amir Machmud, and the Minister for Information, Air Vice-Marshal Budiardo who met with the 175 delegates in a public greeting ceremony. The day of the first 'Act' was attended by other dignitaries, including the UN representative, Dr Sanz, and the Australian, Dutch and Thai Ambassadors to Jakarta, who accompanied Indonesian Foreign Minister Malik. On Wednesday 16 July 1969, similar proceedings were enacted at Wamena, with largely the same results. This process was repeated, with regional variations in the six remaining centres for the following two weeks:

> The various Pepera were conducted with all the familiar instruments of Indonesian political persuasion and intimidation. There were free cigarettes, cheap plastic brief cases and food and goods specially flown into all centres for the occasion combined with heavy handed police and security activities.[3]

Each session lasted for half a day and followed a similar format, and without exception, all members spoke in favour of West New

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1 Harris, personal interview with R.W. Furlonger, Canberra, November 1980.

2 Hastings, P., New Guinea, pp.222-223.

3 Ibid.

Guinea retaining its links with Indonesia.

Following the results of the third 'Act', conducted at Nabire on 18 July, Indonesia's confidence was running at a high level. This induced the Minister for the Interior (Machmud) to announce that Indonesia had, already, emerged triumphant from the 'Act of Free Choice' for the reason that the first three councils, with its 525 members representing a population of 467 000 -- over half the West Irian population --represented an overall membership majority.[1] Following the session in Jayapura on 2 August, Malik contacted the UN Secretary-General and informed him that the 'people of West Irian, through their elected representatives have ... clearly and unequivocally expressed their unanimous decision to remain within the Republic of Indonesia'.[2] For all practical purposes the process of confirming West Irian's incorporation into the Republic was over, although, the extent of the aftermath depended largely on the manner in which Indonesia chose to proclaim the result on Independence Day later that month, and on the report of the UN representative, Ortiz Sanz.

Meanwhile, if there were any doubts about Indonesia's intentions to orchestrate these events in West Irian, the Indonesian Ambassador to Australia put them to rest at a meeting of the National Press Club in Canberra on Wednesday 16 July, by making it clear that, 'In our heart and mind -- I would like to be blunt about this -- it is precalculated'. The Ambassador worded his comments carefully and in terms that reflected Indonesia's historical right to, and a concern for security in, West Irian. More than this, he argued that if Indonesia were not allowed to develop West Irian, it would become a 'hot spot', endangering not only Indonesia and Australia but the whole world.[3]

Within days, Freeth reaffirmed the Australian Government's policy of non-interference in the election process. In an interview on the Australian Broadcasting Commission's 'Four Corners', the Minister argued that Australia had had its hands tied over the elections because it was 'a matter which is being

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1 The Age, 21 July 1969.

2 Malik's telegram to the Secretary-General is quoted in Annex I, A/7723, p.19.

3 The Australian, 17 July 1969.

internationally administered by an international agreement between two countries'.[1] While he said Australia had 'no legal standing' in the matter, he did concede that he was concerned that the people of West Irian were not properly represented in the 'Act of Free Choice'. However, leaving little doubt in anyone's mind that self-interest and not self-determination was the driving force of Australian policy, he stressed that 'I am not here to defend the Indonesian Government', adding that Australia's long and short-term interests were the only considerations he would give to the matter. As expected, the assemblies reached unanimous decisions to remain with Indonesia. On 5 August 1969, Malik announced the outcome, adding that the 'Act of Free Choice' was 'final' and could not be held to doubts by the UN 'or by other countries'. On 16 August, Suharto announced that West Irian was 'now an indisputable part of Indonesia'.[2]

It was apparent from Dr. Ortiz's final report that the results of these successive consultations did not rest well with the UN representative. While Ortiz explained that he had no alternative but to accept Indonesia's choice of method in conducting the 'Act of Free Choice',[3] he noted 'that without doubt certain elements of the population of West Irian held firm convictions in favour of independence'.[4] Moreover, while it could be alternatively argued that there was some measure of support among the people for retaining ties with Indonesia, it could be stated that, as the Indonesian Government had 'exercised at all times a tight political control over the population',[5] the Papuans were not really given a free choice.

Conclusion

Many Australian consciences were clearly offended by the official Australian desire and readiness to accept the inevitable

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1 The Australian, 21 July 1969.

2 Quoted in van der Kroef, J.M., "Australia and the West Irian Problem", p.484.

3 Annex I, A/7723, p.10.

4 Ibid., P.20.

5 Ibid.

in West Irian, even in the face of repeated instances of anti-Indonesian rebellion among the West Irianese. Freeth's position was totally unacceptable to a large cross-section of Australia's articulate opinion, including the press, Parliament, and the churches, and it gave rise to uncompromising criticism over his 'Act of Free Choice' and 'Refugee/Border-Crossers' policies. In an editorial following the first week of the Pepera, the Australian, compelled by Freeth's comments and reflecting the core of this criticism, stressed some of the factors that Freeth, 'for reasons of diplomatic nicety', had not been able to bring out in the West Irian argument. The first related to 'the raising of totally false expectations inside and outside West Irian'. The second was that the 'Act of Free Choice' was never intended to be anything more than a face-saving device for the Dutch who always intended to relinquish control to Indonesia. The newspaper considered Indonesia, for its part, saw the 'Acts' as 'acts of grace to smooth the path back to normal relations with the Hague, and to reinforce the legitimacy of the transfer'.[1]

Clearly, whether Freeth's policy on West New Guinea was criticized on grounds of questionable morality or of simply neglecting the consequences for Australia's interests, it was noticeable right across the spectrum that the emphasis of criticism centred more on the style of Freeth's West New Guinea policy rather than its substance. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the thrust and intensity of these criticisms of the moral and legal aspects of the dispute, the debate died down, with the overwhelmingly greater part of Australian press and other public opinion reluctantly accepting the Indonesian fait accompli in West Irian.[2] The West New Guinea question, and its inherent problems, were to become submerged under the weight of other issues. In Australia, on the domestic level, these centred on the forthcoming election; in regional terms, on problems that were emerging in East New Guinea, where a copper company's plans to take over traditional lands were giving rise to popular unrest; and on the international plane, the all encompassing manifestations of the American and British decisions to wind down their security roles in the region. The latter

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1 The Australian, 21 July 1969.

2 See Chapter Six.

issue, particularly, demanded Australia's endorsement of Indonesia's policy in West Irian. That Indonesia had an emerging position and role in the region was clear when President Nixon in Jakarta on Sunday 27 July 1969, pledged America's full cooperation in Indonesia's movement towards economic and social development.[1]

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[1] The Australian, 29 July 1969.

PART TWO

A VULNERABLE RELATIONSHIP? : AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS BEFORE THE COUP IN PORTUGAL (APRIL, 1974)

Introduction

To this point, emphasis has been on relations conducted at the government-to-government level, stressing the international context and Indonesia's strengthening role in Australia's continuing search for regional security. However, this has tended to cast into the shadows an important, though evolving, dimension of the broader story of Australian-Indonesian relations -- domestic political opinion. In the ten years following the coup in Jakarta, a small groundswell of opinion on Indonesian issues gained momentum in Australia on the tide of events that were taking place in Indonesia. Such developments, particularly the consolidation of the army leadership at the expense of the New Order civilian elements, compelled debate not only on the nature of those trends but also on Australia's Indonesia policy, and the risks associated with successive Australian governments having become too closely identified with the Suharto regime.

Part Two describes and analyses these attitudes and opinions and relates them to the policies pursued by the Australian Government. It is divided into three chapters, and contains the views of politicians, academics, interest groups and individuals, as well as the press which emerged as a most important source of analyses of, and commentaries on, international affairs during this period. These views can be taken together as a representative cross-section of informed opinion on Indonesian affairs between 1965 and 1974, and it is the purpose here to survey such opinion as well as to evaluate its impact on Australia's Indonesia policy.

'Public Opinion': A Framework

While the term 'public opinion' is often used in political discussion, it is difficult to define precisely what it means as there is no 'single or united public opinion'; there are only public opinions -- individuals and groups holding different attitudes and views on a wide range of issues. Moreover, while

community attitudes change and the political public itself changes, not all expressions of public concern are equally powerful or important. Some opinions carry greater weight because those who offer them are in positions of influence, for example trade union leaders and businessmen. Other types of opinion matter because they are effectively organized.

Yet, the phrase 'public opinion' -- that is, what the majority of people feel on any issue -- is useful in political discussion, because the importance of public opinion is that it provides an important link between the people and the government. The feelings and attitudes of individuals, whether communicated through groups, public opinion polls, demonstrations or election results, become one source of opinion a government will wish to consider in framing its policies. While it has been argued that the general public plays a minor role in the conduct of international politics -- mobilized only when aroused or organized by parties or interest groups or when panicked by a major crisis[1] -- decision makers do not formulate policy independently of 'certain policy criteria in the form of widely held values and expectations'.[2] In this context 'Government ... identif[ies] itself almost unconsciously with a vaguely sensed general will, and no clear formulation of the pressure of public opinion upon Government policy ever occurs'.[3] This 'general will' is now examined in detail.

Clearly, foreign policy making is a matter for the executive branch of government. However, in the past twenty to thirty years the international and domestic conditions which have supported the insulation of foreign policy from domestic politics have been considerably eroded. During this period, the transformation of the foreign policy environment by socio-economic, political and technological developments has altered the policy maker's situation markedly. The degree to which foreign policy has remained a

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1 Duchacek, I.D., Nations and Men: An Introduction to International Politics. The Dryden Press, Illinois, 1975, p.214.

2 Almond, G., The American People and Foreign Policy. Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1950, p.6.

3 Younger, K., "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy", British Journal of Sociology, No.6, June 1955, p. 169.

separate area or has become part of the domestic political process, however, is a matter of some uncertainty.

While little influence is afforded public opinion in terms of determining foreign policy,[1] it does provide a direct link between the people and specific political actions, exemplifying a basic kind of democratic procedure.[2] In elaborating on its utility, some distinctions need to be made within and between what Cohen describes as effective public opinion[3] and those opinions held by the community.

Of the first, there are two forms of effective public opinion or ways that people can seek to influence government policies. One is the climate of opinion within which decisions on foreign policy are made,[4] while the second is made up of the articulate expressions on policy of specific individuals and groups, including the Parliament and the media - the press, television and radio.[5] Unlike opinions held by the community at large, which find expression in opinion polls and, in turn, provide a wider context, if not parameters,[6] to decisions on foreign policy, articulate opinion has an activist dimension. Community (public) opinion

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1 The public's role in foreign policy formulation varies from issue to issue but most academic studies on the opinion-policy relationship accord only a passive if not peripheral role to public opinion. It is acknowledged, however, that the crux of any theorising about this nexus is inexorably bound to the concept of 'influence'. See Waltz, K., "Electoral Punishment and Foreign Policy Crises", in Rosenau, J.N., (ed.), Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy. Free Press, New York, 1967; Frankel, J., The Making of Foreign Policy. Oxford University Press, London, 1967.

2 Moodie, G.C., and Studdert-Kennedy, G., Opinions, Publics and Pressure Groups. George Allen and Unwin, London, 1970.

3 Cohen, B.C., The Political Process and Foreign Policy : The Making of the Japanese Peace Settlement. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1957, p.29.

4 Millar, T.B., Australia in Peace and War, p.43.

5 Cohen, B.C., The Political Process and Foreign Policy. Chs. 3-6 and 10. Due to the enormity of undertaking an examination of radio and television comment, this study concentrates solely on press (newspapers) opinion.

6 Reynolds, P.A., An Introduction to International Relations (2nd ed.), Longman, New York, 1980, p.83.

tends to be spontaneous, often a reaction to a specific event or policy change. Sometimes ill-informed and not intensively felt, mass public opinion may also be fickle.[1] On the other hand, articulate opinion seeks, through argument and with regard to specific interests, to influence policy makers, either directly or indirectly, by shaping public attitudes. For this reason, policy makers tend to give greater political weighting to articulate opinion (see Chapter Six).

Groups form one of the major channels through which such opinions are expressed. Whether wishing to promote particular policies (for example trade or investment), to press for solutions to specific issues, or simply to encourage understanding or friendship, these interest groups[2] provide an important link between the people and government.[3] Another important and politically influential component of articulate opinion is formed by individuals. Whether academics, former party leaders and ex-bureaucrats, or public commentators, each seeks to influence policy through a public expression of their views. This, as is also the case with interest groups, is supplemented when possible by direct personal contact with those in the policy making process.

The media, especially the press, play an important role in the activities of almost all these groups, as well as in the expression of articulate expression (see Chapter Four). Their power is found not only in its factual reporting and its evaluative editorial opinions, but also in its role in conveying opinions, expressed by other groups, to an audience that includes both policy makers and the public at large. Finally, an appraisal of the role of the Parliament, which is undertaken in Chapter Five, completes the picture of those aspects of the foreign policy making process under

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1 Holsti, K.J., International Politics, p.342.

2 For the purpose of analysis, an interest group is often identified in terms of the 'shared values' of its members, vocationally based, having ties with government and continuing channels of political access. For example, the Australian-Indonesian Business Cooperation Committee. Opinion groups are voluntary associations actively pursuing policy objectives by means other than those resulting from continuing relationships with the government. For example, the Campaign for an Independent East Timor (CIET).

3 Millar, T.B., Australia in Peace and War, pp.44-48.

review in this section. While the majority party or parties ultimately control the formal decisions of the Parliament, the parliamentary debate in both the House of Representatives and the Senate often clarifies the issues, adding a significant dimension to this process.[1] More importantly, however, the forum of Parliament can be used by MPs seeking to influence foreign policy decisions.

The Australian Context

In early February 1972, a day before Suharto was due to visit Australia for the first time, journalist Bruce Grant suggested that the Indonesian President would 'be wise not to dismiss lightly, growing concern in Australia about some social developments in Indonesia'. Elaborating, Grant warned:

> The consensus in Australia in support of close relations with Indonesia can be damaged seriously...if Australians believe that they are helping to keep in power a regime, especially a military dictatorship, which rules on behalf of a privileged class or caste... In [such] circumstances it is doubtful whether any reasons of State, however strong, would persuade Australians against their consciences, that the consensus should be maintained.[2]

When Suharto departed, the Australian's Robert Duffield suggested that the President had done so 'leaving Australians little wiser

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[1] While it is widely regarded by commentators that the Parliament does not have a substantial role in the formulation of foreign policy, it can be effective in setting the constraints within which foreign policy may be conducted. This can be done through a variety of mechanisms, including the party backbench committee (on foreign affairs) system, the parliamentary library research service (information flow), and the joint party committees (House of Representatives and Senate). For a more detailed examination see Millar, T.B., Australian Peace and War, pp.29-31; Knight, J., "The Royal Prerogative and Foreign Policy: Notes on an Assumption", Australian Outlook, Vol.29, No.4, April, pp.35-43. Miller, J.D.B., Australia and Foreign Policy, the Boyer Lectures (1963), Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, 1963. See also Knight, J. and Hudson, W.J., Parliament and Foreign Policy, Canberra studies in World Affairs No.14, Department of International Relations, ANU and AIIA, Canberra, 1983; Indyk, M., Influences Without Power: The Role of the Backbench in Australian Foreign Policy 1976-1977, APSA/Parliamentary Fellow Monograph, No.1, 1979.

[2] The Age, 5 February 1972.

about him or his country'.[1] More precisely, the question remained as to whether or not Suharto was any the wiser about Australian attitudes and opinions that fell outside the consensus which Grant alluded to. Such a question must also be extended to the Australian Government and its awareness and understanding of those attitudes, because Grant had identified something a great deal deeper than mere opinion. In the context of Australia's burgeoning relationship with Indonesia, he was alluding to a growing 'conflict between statecraft and human conscience' which was emerging as a tangible element in the relationship -- deeply embedded and 'one which Australia and Indonesia cannot expect to dispel overnight'.[2] Thus, although the Australian Government had consolidated good relations with the Indonesian Government by the time of Suharto's visit, it did not have the broad consensus of support it would have liked from within the Australian community.[3]

As already stated, its diplomacy had been directed to enhancing Indonesia's status as a regional force. Against this background, the Suharto visit produced agreement which promised a bright future, with the two countries committing themselves to upgrading economic, military and political cooperation. Australian determination to retain and develop strong relations was sustained by the new Whitlam government. By the beginning of 1974, the Australian Government was working persistently for the development of cooperation in those areas where there was something to gain, and notwithstanding Whitlam's early unsuccessful forays into regional diplomacy, it was determined to keep the relationship buoyant.

However, a perceived deterioration in Indonesia's domestic situation had created by now an uneasiness within Australia, especially among journalists, lawyers and scholars -- some of whom were internationally known for their work on Indonesia. Nevertheless, it became progressively clearer that Indonesia did not share the Australian Government's growing concern that

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1 The Australian, 12 February 1972.

2 The Age, 5 February 1972.

3 As noted earlier, this section limits its analysis to the press, the Federal Parliament, and to selected groups and individuals.

Indonesia should have an interest in strengthening, rather than weakening (through its domestic policies), the existing, although eroding, Australian consensus in favour of close ties.

On the eve of the East Timor issue, Hastings put this situation in a different perspective when he wrote:

> One of the more interesting tendencies these days among politicians and academics of certain disposition - by no means confined to the left - is Asia-'knocking'. It manifests itself in loosely characterising ... Malaysia as 'racist', Thailand as 'corrupt' ... and Indonesia as 'right-wing militarist'. The impact of these views is that Australia should have nothing to do with these countries or that it should seek, by withholding aid, refusing defence cooperation and generally indicating disapproval, to get them to re-order their societies in a fashion more congenial to Australian democratic sensitivities. Apart from the fact that attitudes like these scarcely win friends and influence people if translated into foreign affairs, they are also half-truths at best.[1]

The task now is to analyse the framework of issues that concerned Grant's 'consensus' and which gave rise to the trend identified by Hastings. This, as indicated, will be served best by broadening Hasting's focus to include not only politicians and academics, but also the press, interest groups, and community opinion generally.

The seeds of uneasiness were sown in 1968 with the debate on Indonesian issues centring on the economic development strategy pursued by the government in Indonesia, and political prisoners. It picked up momentum on the wave of dissent over the West New Guinea issue in 1969 and continued into the 1970s. The purpose here is to trace this early concern, its intensity and bearing, up until the Suharto visit in 1972. The respective chapters will then focus on its manifestation during the 1972-1974 period. In doing so, it identifies only the main groups and individuals that were flushed out at varying times over the six-year period, to focus on the issues that concerned them[2] and, in general, to put this local opinion into some kind of perspective.

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[1] The Sydney Morning Herald, 6 November 1973.

[2] The major issue examined here concerns the broader economic and political developments in Indonesia.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCILIATION AND OPTIMISM: AUSTRALIAN PRESS OPINION (1965-1974)

Introduction

As already stated, the press constitutes one of the major channels linking the public with the decision makers, and influences the decision-making process in two distinct ways. First, it reflects the depth and intensity of public interest in particular issues by reporting actions and statements concerning policy and by assessing individual questions in editorials and commentaries. Moreover, it provides those involved in the formulation of policy with a vehicle to disseminate information and publicize their own views.

Second, as the major source of information for the public, the press is able to influence the nature of public response to particular issues through the kind of coverage accorded them. By establishing the focus of attention, the press indirectly determines how the public will react. This chapter assesses the extent to which the press fulfil these functions -- that is, as a forum and a conveyer of information[1] -- in relation to Indonesian issues.[2]

Until the end of confrontation in August 1966, Australian press opinion had pursued two major themes: the first evoked a sense of anticipation and was related to developments in the domestic power struggle unfolding in Indonesia. The second centred on the notion of the importance that a stable and prosperous Indonesia had for Australia's long-term security interests. The ending of confrontation roughly coincided with the commencement of Suharto's stabilization programme in the latter part of 1966. Thus, the reaction of the Australian press with regard to these events was reserved and marked by caution. During the next three

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1 Grant, B., "Foreign Affairs and the Australian Press", Twentieth Roy Milne Memorial Lecture, Sydney, 1969, p.18. Grant saw the press contributing to the foreign policy process in two ways: by providing a platform for debate and by acting as a spokesperson for society.

2 The main issues which are examined relate to political and economic developments.

years, this reticence, however, gave way to optimistic assessments of Indonesia's consolidation and future, only to be overshadowed in the latter stages of the period by rising concern regarding the direction taken by the new regime and the costs involved. For many observers in the press, events arising from the West New Guinea issue in 1969 confirmed some of their consternations, as did developments in Indonesia up until the mid-1970s.

The Demise of Sukarno

Generally, the press documented the 30 September Coup and its aftermath with varying interpretations and intensity. The majority of press correspondents[1] conducted careful and useful assessments of events as they unfolded, with the downfall of some of the major actors during the Sukarno years -- Dr Subandrio, Aidit, Njono, and the PKI -- generating most interest in the first six months after the coup.[2]

At another level, editorial opinion during the period ranged from the Sydney Morning Herald's perceptive, but rather critical, attacks on the architects and props of confrontation -- the PKI,

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1 In particular Peter Hastings, Stanley Karnow, R.E. Stannard, Alan Ramsey, Ian Ward of the Australian; Frank Palmos of the Sunday Mail; Denis Warner of the Sydney Morning Herald; Creighton Burns of the Canberra Times; Bruce Grant of the Age; the Bulletin also covered these events extensively with reports from Dennis Bloodworth, Bruce Grant and Gavin Young. The majority of these correspondents were based in the region and were a valuable source of information apart from news agency reports.

2 See for example the Australian's coverage: "Vengeance Slaughter: 100 000 believed killed in Indonesia" (24 December 1965); "Nasution backed for power post: Sukarno's heir apparent" (27 December 1965); "Generals won't let Sukarno go" (1 February 1966); "I am the Army and the people - Bung Karno" (1 February 1966); "Indonesian Front to seek full PKI ban" (5 February 1966); "China protests on 'barbarous' attack" (5 February 1966); "Officers begin drive to topple Subandrio: Sukarno would be isolated" (22 February 1966); "Death sentence for PKI leader" (23 February 1966); "Generals desert Nasution and back Sukarno" (25 February 1966); "Sukarno back with China?" (26 February 1966); "Sukarno knew all - Witness" (28 February 1966); "Shann: We are friends" (2 March 1966); "Blockade on Sukarno men" (12 March 1966); "The final revolt or Sukarno manoeuvre?" (14 March 1966); "President Vanishes as Army triumphs" (14 March 1966); "Nasution influence seen behind new five" (21 March 1966); "All Reds sacked from Cabinet" (29 March 1966).

Subandrio and Sukarno[1] -- the undisguised ridicule of Sukarno, and his overall foreign policies on the part of the Age;[2] the Canberra Times[3] sympathetic call that respect be shown for Indonesia's 'domestic privacy'; to the Australian,[4] which found it 'possible to suffer genuine revulsion at the apparent glee with which some extremists in this country have watched the further deterioration of [Indonesia's] economy'. All, however, had a number of concerns in common: that the ending of confrontation was imperative -- in human and security terms -- and that Indonesian leaders redirect their energies and resources toward extricating Indonesia from the economic quagmire into which she had plunged during the Sukarno regime.

The Sydney Morning Herald, in particular, sustained staunch derision of Sukarno and his government, and the implications of their rule in domestic socio-economic and political terms.[5] Fundamental to its position, expressed at the outset, was its belief that 'an essential precondition of economic security must be an end to the expensive, futile and resource-consuming exercise of 'confrontation''.[6]

While criticism of Sukarno and Subandrio marked many of the Age's editorials, it was rather more restrained in its view of whether the duo would survive the upheavals of the post-coup period. It found that in the absence of unbiased and uncensored reporting from the centre of the conflict it would be too early to establish in whose hands power really lay in Indonesia. Moreover, it considered 'Indonesia's future domestic and foreign policy has still to be determined by an angry and confused people'.[7] The

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 December 1965 and 22 December 1965.

2 The Age, 14 December 1965, 23 February 1966 and 13 March 1966.

3 The Canberra Times, 25 January 1966

4 The Australian, 30 December 1965.

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 December 1965, 22 December 1965, 14 March 1965, 21 March 1966 and 9 May 1966.

6 The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 December 1965.

7 The Age, 23 February 1966.

Canberra Times pursued a similar theme and expressed concern not for the Indonesia State but for its people. In a series of sensible editorials[1] it documented the tragedy that was unfolding, and counselled restraint in Australia's observations of the unfortunate manifestations of Sukarno's rule.

Interestingly, most Australian newspapers were not completely convinced that Sukarno was losing effective power, while they were convinced that Australia had a role to play. The Australian led the rally in this regard, although it cautioned that:

> In the present highly charged atmosphere of Indonesia, it would be easy for any outside influence to be misunderstood - even influence from a country, such as Australia, which is conceded a special position.[2]

The Australian's advocation of 'patient diplomatic spadework, rather than public intergovernmental discussion'[3] was shared by the Canberra Times which, although praising in its observations of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta over so many eventful years, harboured a 'nagging doubt... That this diplomatic and proper silence might not be enough'.[4] In rationalizing the confusion that marked Australian interpretation of events in Indonesia, the Australian, in what was to emerge as a common theme in the next ten years, suggested that, 'the main reason we do not understand them is our insistence on observing and even judging Asians ... by Western criteria'.[5]

When the 11 March order was signed, delegating powers to General Suharto, the Australian press reacted cautiously. The Mercury (14 March 1966) thought that 'it was more a matter for speculation than surprise', while the Sydney Morning Herald[6] counselled caution in any assessment of its implications. These sentiments were characteristic of Australian press interpretations of events in Indonesia for the remainder of the year and gave rise

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1 The Canberra Times, 25 January 1966 and 5 March 1966.

2 The Australian, 30 December 1965.

3 The Australian, 1 January 1966.

4 The Canberra Times, 25 January 1966

5 The Australian, 24 February 1966.

6 The Sydney Morning Herald, 14 March 1966.

to much speculation about the capacity of Suharto to sustain his position. The Age, in particular, felt that because economic deterioration and anti-communist sentiments had inspired the move against Sukarno, the Suharto regime, if it were to survive, would have to first consolidate its power, and then turn towards making a determined effort to address Indonesia's internal disorders.[1] The Advertiser[2] was more specific and saw the critical questions as being whether or not the military could deal with immediate problems of inflation, inefficiency and corruption,areas where their record was not solid (and was to prove problematic in the years to come).

This economic aspect preoccupied most of the press, with the Canberra Times[3] and the Mercury[4] particularly holding fears that as the Army had always been enthusiastic about confrontation, the resources needed to maintain the campaign would continue to be wasted in that direction. Foreign policy matters, confrontation in particular, were of immediate concern however, as many in the press believed its abandonment would pave the way for economic rehabilitation. Most newspaper editorials[5] called for a redirection in this area, although there was no outright expectation that any immediate or dramatic changes would take place in Indonesia's external behaviour particularly, as the Advertiser rather perceptively warned, it 'may be too valuable an outlet for Indonesian nationalism to be dropped'.[6]

The Sydney Morning Herald[7] continued its vilification of Sukarno and his persistent attempts to retain the threads of power (protecting and resuscitating the PKI, preserving left-wing of influence in the government -- notably Subandrio's -- and to

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1 The Age, 14 March 1966.

2 The Advertiser, 14 March 1966.

3 The Canberra Times, 14 March 1966.

4 The Mercury, 16 March 1966.

5 See, for example, the Sydney Morning Herald, 21 March 1966; the Advertiser, 22 March 1966.

6 The Advertiser, 22 March 1966.

7 The Sydney Morning Herald, 14 March 1966.

re-establish closer ties with Peking). What particularly peeved the Sydney daily was Suharto's slow movement toward consolidating power. This impatience threaded itself through many of its editorials, manifesting itself in early 1967 when, in response to Sukarno's persistent threshing about in the political net, it hinted rather provocatively to its readers that Suharto could use military action against Sukarno's 'calculated obstructionism' instead of waiting for the 'doubtful processes' of the People's Congress. This apparent languor on the part of Suharto (and the military), and his clear involvement in the power struggle, concerned not only the Sydney Morning Herald[1] but the Canberra Times[2] and the West Australian.[3] The thrust of their arguments centred on the pre-occupation of a government trying to curb Sukarno and to assert its full authority at a time when it should have been concentrating on redressing Indonesia's economic problems. The Advertiser went as far as to warn that if the chaos continued, an explosion of nationalism would occur 'far more dangerous than anything the world has seen so far in Indonesia'.[4] For Denis Warner, writing in the Sydney Morning Herald in early 1967, these events in Indonesia held wider implications, because:

> the behind-the-scene political manoeuvring could help to undermine confidence in the ... assurance that the Government will create the conditions that will make it possible for foreign capital to have the confidence that it can work undisturbed in Indonesia.[5]

Not all papers expressed this impatience and concern, while most displayed a shallow understanding of Indonesia. Some recognized the merit in taking a softer line with Sukarno, acknowledging that a large element within the Indonesian population continued to see Sukarno as Indonesia's 'natural' leader. Even the Sydney Morning Herald, carrying a lead article by Warner, expressed this very point, giving historical and contemporary political reasons why

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1 See also the Sydney Morning Herald, 14 September 1966.

2 The Canberra Times, 14 March 1966.

3 The West Australian, 30 September 1966.

4 The Advertiser, 8 August 1966.

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 February 1967.

Suharto needed to retain Sukarno as a 'figure-head'.[1] Editorials in the Advertiser[2] and the Age[3] shared Warner's views, as did the Mercury.[4]

The appointment of Malik, of impeccable anti-communist credentials, as Acting Foreign Minister and second Deputy Prime Minister, received widespread approval in the Australian press, as did the announcement of a new Cabinet, although the Sydney Morning Herald[5] indicated to its readers that Malik was not pro-Western and could be best described as an 'Indonesian nationalist with a Trotskyist background'. Subsequent statements by Malik and Suharto on confrontation held most attention for the press, in particular their gradual movement toward discussing its abandonment. It paved the way for wider and, for the most part, positive interpretations of developments in Indonesia, its future direction and the implications of both for Australia in national interest terms.[6] In this regard the press had been, up until this time, far from reticent about stressing the importance of Australia's national interests, arguing, as the Sydney Morning Herald did in May 1966, and reinforced continually up until Hasluck's visit in August, how important 'a stable and prosperous Indonesia would be [to] ... Australia for reasons of security as well as trade'. The Canberra Times put it in terms easily understood by its readers, at what was an important stage in Australia's history, when it argued soberly that:

> For Australia, the Indonesian problem could prove strategically and politically more important than the

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 18 March 1966.

2 The Advertiser, 14 March 1966.

3 The Age, 31 March 1966.

4 The Mercury, 16 March 1966.

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 March 1966.

6 See the Sydney Morning Herald, 9 May 1966, 18 May 1966, 19 May 1966, 3 June 1966; the Canberra Times 9 May 1966, 20 May 1966, 6 June 1966, 13 June 1966, 12 August 1966; the Advertiser, 7 July 1966; the Mercury, 16 March 1966, 2 May 1966, 23 June 1966, 27 June 1966; the West Australian, 14 March 1966, 3 June 1966; the Age, 19 April 1966, 14 April 1966, 17 May 1966, 28 May 1966, 3 June 1966, 2 July 1966, 5 July 1966 and 16 July 1966.

> situation in Vietnam. We may sigh with relief at the ending of Confrontation, but we should also realise that the battle for survival of the new forces inside Indonesia is only just beginning.[1]

In sum, many in the press considered that the ending of confrontation would hold financial and security implications for Australia. First, the Australian defence budget would be shedding the financial burden associated with Australia's response to the campaign; and second, the prospect of a substantial withdrawal of British forces from the area was imminent.

The second of these implications drew protracted analyses from the Advertiser[2] and, again, the Sydney Morning Herald. The latter put it to its readers that an end to confrontation could pose as many problems for Australia as it solved.[3] It was at this point that the Sydney Morning Herald argued, rather perceptively, for a redefinition of the role and responsibilities of the Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve, and Australia's role in it, in any kind of post-confrontation regional setting. Fundamental to this re-evaluation was the belief that, with Indonesia casting off its Communist coat and displaying the potential to become a powerful force of stability in the region, Australia could not afford to offend her by giving her the impression that it would be 'irrevocably and indefinitely' committed to the support of Malaysia. The seeds of such a notion (of not offending Indonesia) were sure to be fertilised by the uncertainty that surrounded the future of Britain's presence in the region. In this situation, argued the Sydney newspaper, it would be unacceptable for Australia to be the sole or even principal Commonwealth force in Malaysia and Singapore.

Denis Warner took up this theme in the Advertiser,[4] drawing sustenance from a recently published article in the journal Survival.[5] However, Warner came the full circle and allocated an

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1 The Canberra Times, 13 June 1966.

2 The Advertiser, 16 August 1966.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 3 June 1966.

4 The Advertiser, 16 August 1966.

5 Buchan, A., "Britain in the Indian Ocean", Survival, Vol.VIII, No.7, July 1966, pp.222-228.

important role for Australia in the wake of a British withdrawal. He believed that there was 'a healthy trend towards regional cooperation now replacing the truculence of confrontation in the southern tier of Southeast Asia', and warned that until the countries of the region could assure their own security, although it fell on Australia's shoulders to bear the responsibilities left behind by Britain. This potential dilemma, however, was too far down the track for the Canberra Times which continued to be less optimistic about the prospects of a post-confrontation Indonesia. It warned that although moderates wielded the major influence in Jakarta, there were still hawks in positions of power. Besides:

> the history of the past three years of Confrontation, the old Indonesian tactics of blow hot, blow cold, the uncertainties of power within Indonesia today, all dictate that we should view these developments with care.[1]

At this point, it was clear that there was a division in the press about Indonesia's reluctance to commit itself to an official ending to confrontation. Although it was a diplomatically safe attitude to be adopted by the Indonesians, it was at variance with the help that was coming in from other countries. While this was a matter related to timing, some in the press argued this reluctance could prove of little consequence. However, others argued if it indicated a lack of appreciation on the part of the Indonesian administration of the urgency of their predicament, then it could be more serious. On another plane, the Canberra Times[2] and the Mercury[3] began to shift the focus of their analysis away from the likely prospect of an end to confrontation to the equally likely power struggle it would give way to.

An end to confrontation, therefore, had its consequences, in regional and domestic terms. On balance, it would be of immense significance to Australia. And this theme dominated press appraisals of its official ending in August. The Canberra Times saw it, as did most of the press, in the following terms:

> It lessens political tensions in our immediate strategic area and foreshadows a growth of trade which could help

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1 The Canberra Times, 20 May 1966.

2 The Canberra Times, 13 July 1966.

3 The Mercury, 2 May 1966.

cushion the effect of a British move into the Common Market.[1]

Meanwhile Hasluck announced an increase in Colombo Plan programming for Indonesia for the following year. The press considered it should be seen for the 'spirit of cooperation' rather than 'the scale of its contribution for solving Indonesia's economic difficulties' -- something the West Australian[2] had hinted at earlier in June.

The Sydney Morning Herald,[3] in contradiction to its advice in March, counselled Hasluck to move with caution, and considered his course of waiting for developments to consolidate themselves in Indonesia as a 'prudent' and wise one. Forgotten was the view that the urgency of the post-coup situation in Indonesia should have convinced Hasluck to abandon his 'pussy-footing' approach. The Sydney Morning Herald at that time considered that 'It is not the occasion for too nice an attention to the delicacies of non-interference'.[4]

The Age[5] had always tried to pursue an even line, urging Australia to engage in 'watchful and flexible diplomacy'; it now looked for some practical response from Canberra and suggested that 'a handout in time may be a sound political and economic investment'.[6] This view was shared by the Advertiser[7] which argued that the most pressing problems facing Indonesia were related to creditors, rescheduling of debts and raising new loans. However, although a role for Australia in this process would be 'a small price to pay for the economic rehabilitation and political stability of Indonesia', it was quick to warn, that 'nothing is likely to follow automatically from an economic rescue operation', not least the securing of Indonesia's friendship. This emphasis on

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1 The Canberra Times, 12 August 1966.

2 The West Australian, 3 June 1966.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 8 August 1966.

4 The Sydney Morning Herlad, 14 March 1966.

5 The Age, 9 April 1966.

6 The Age, 22 September 1966.

7 The Advertiser, 8 August 1966.

friendship with Indonesia, together with the need for economic reform (for strategic reasons) dominated the Australian press coverage of events in Indonesia, as they unfolded up until March 1967, when Suharto became acting-President.

While Hasluck's trip to Indonesia in January 1967 provided the backdrop to the development of these two themes,[1] the Canberra Times warned upon Hasluck's return that 'one overpowering consideration' underlined his early diplomacy:

> that Australia stands to gain relatively more from a strong prosperous Indonesia than most other nations do. A strong Indonesia with its economic problems under control means stability in the region.[2]

Much of the press, however, became too anxious, expressing disappointment at the slow pace towards economic reform by the Indonesian regime, while recognizing the three major obstacles of this reform -- the appalling state of the economy the regime had inherited, a shortage of trained and qualified people in the administrative processes and, 'less obvious but no less potent' was 'Sukarno's exploitation of all his remaining and by no means inconsiderable power in a campaign of deliberately calculated obstructionism'.[3] This power struggle concerned many press observers,[4] so much so that the Sydney Morning Herald pointed out to its readers that it seemed probable that Suharto may remove Sukarno using 'military action' instead of waiting for a solution to the struggle through the democratic processes inherent in the People's Congress.[5]

The Canberra Times[6] called for vigilance and warned against becoming complacent -- a view shared by the Northern Daily Leader,

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1 See Frank Palmos, Sunday Mail, 14 August 1966; and the Sydney Morning Herald, 25 January 1967.

2 The Canberra Times, 1 February 1967.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 January 1967.

4 See, for example, Creighton Burns, the Canberra Times, 27 January 1967.

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 January 1967.

6 The Canberra Times, 1 February 1967.

and which it had already expressed in November.[1] As the Canberra Times argued:

> the new regime has to show results; if it does not, the people may begin to compare their new state with their old -- to the disadvantage of the present rule. There is no promise of stability in that[2].

Consolidation of Suharto's Power: and the Ending of Confrontation

The removal of Sukarno from the Indonesian Presidency or, as Grant put it in the Age, perhaps describing more accurately the sophisticated political exercise which had just ended in Jakarta, 'the removal of the Presidency from Sukarno',[3] prompted a flurry of articles and editorial opinion in the Australian press. The Sydney Morning Herald assessed Sukarno's role in Indonesia's history and concluded his demise was the best outcome believing:

> the greatest single obstacle to the political and economic spring cleaning of which Indonesia stands so desperately in need, has been removed. The Indonesian people... are entitled to hope that a new era has dawned.[4]

Such a hope was also held by the Australian press which was preoccupied with three themes throughout 1967 and the early months of 1968 -- Indonesia's economic reconstruction, security and defence issues and a return to democracy in Indonesia.

All major papers, either in their editorials or lead stories, expressed a strong desire to see Indonesia become an economically viable state. And as the year went on it became clear that the Australian press was generally more hopeful about Indonesia's future prospects, although many papers acknowledged the uncertainties that cast a shadow over any optimism. This was perceptively conveyed by the Examiner, when it told its readers that although the Suharto regime was making moves to overcome endemic corruption and inefficiency, 'the Government's task now is to establish the economy before a rising tide of popular impatience and destructive inflation foster an uprising more successful than

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1 The Northern Daily Leader, 14 January 1967 and 30 November 1966.

2 The Canberra Times, 1 February 1967.

3 The Age, 2 March 1967.

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 13 March 1967.

the communist coup'.[1]

This had been taken up earlier and quite forcefully by the Canberra Times in particular, and it argued that the onus was on the West, in particular Australia, 'to help generously in the restoration of the Indonesian economy and the advance of the Indonesian people'. As far as the Australian role was concerned, it concluded that this restoration 'should be paramount among Australia's policy aims. It is more important than Vietnam or the maintenance of American arms in Southeast Asia'.[2]

To some observers in the press, Indonesia's welfare was not a high Australian foreign policy aim. Grant, reporting from Jakarta, indicated a growing feeling among Indonesian officials and diplomats that Australia was failing to act decisively in the area of economic assistance. They pointed to the fact that other creditor nations, including some with a more remote interest than Australia in Indonesia's stability, had already met the target of $US200 million balance of payments assistance to Indonesia for that year. While these officials did not believe Canberra's reticence was due to any kind of disapproval of the regime, or its intentions, they were:

> puzzled at Australia's parsimony and cynically amused that after preaching to the Indonesians for so long about the need to concentrate on the economy we should now be so slow to show our appreciation.[3]

While Australian businesses had expressed fresh interest in prospects for future Australia-Indonesia trade links, these were long-term and quite properly, rooted in practical commercial considerations. Government-to-government relations, for Grant, were another matter, and the Australian Government in Indonesia was leaving an impression in the minds of many in Indonesia that it 'has been either too hardheaded or negligent in its Indonesian policies this year'[4] -- a view shared by the Age's Creighton Burns[5].

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1 The Examiner, 28 March 1967.

2 The Canberra Times, 14 March 1967.

3 The Age, 14 August 1967.

4 Ibid.

5 The Age, 17 August 1967. Burns criticized the conservatism on the part of Australian business and directed a broadside

It would appear that the Australian press, in general, reacted optimistically towards the overthrow of the left in Indonesia by the military, greeting the latter's plans for economic reconstruction with a great deal of enthusiasm. The Canberra Times argued that 'the situation [in Indonesia] is better than it was eight months ago' and lauded that 'moderates now wield the major influence in Djakarta'.[1] Similarly, the Sydney Morning Herald[2] suggested that the new administration, described by the Sunday Mail[3] as 'sincere' and the Canberra Times as 'politically honest', was aware of the need for urgent economic reforms in Indonesia and the establishment of fruitful economic relations with the West.[4] Such enthusiasm was perhaps understandable in view of the important position Indonesia occupied in Australian regional perceptions. As the Sydney Morning Herald noted:

> One of the most important interests of Australia's foreign policy is that her great Asian neighbour, Indonesia, should be stable, prosperous and under the control of a friendly government.[5]

If, then, Indonesian reconstruction and political stability was in Australia's national interests, it was perhaps only logical that, according to the Australian press, the latter had almost an obligation to contribute positively in this regard and to attempt to foster good relations between the two countries. While it seemed politically and economically sound 'to embark on a massive and integrated drive to help rehabilitate Indonesia',[6] time was of

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at the Australian Government, which he considered had done 'less than it might have to feed capital and technical assistance into the barren Indonesian economy' -- a situation he found ironical in view of Hasluck's thesis that a deteriorating situation in Indonesia was more likely than anything else to undermine the Suharto regime, 'or drive it towards authoritarianism.

1 The Canberra Times, 9 May 1966.

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 January 1968.

3 The Sunday Mail, 14 August 1966.

4 The Canberra Times, 14 March 1967.

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 January 1968.

6 The Age, 8 August 1966.

the essence. The Canberra Times criticized the Australian Government over its seeming hesitancy to commit itself to the task at hand, referring to this reluctance as being indicative of 'a lack of appreciation of the urgency in the situation.[1]

However, despite such obvious enthusiasm, caution was still evident, with Indonesia's past record concerning some in the press. The Canberra Times[2] was still preoccupied with the uncertainties of power within Indonesia, while the Age considered that 'it is too much to assume that the new Indonesian regime will be logical; our best hope is that it will be practical'.[3] The West Australian, referring to the continuing political instability and the sheer magnitude of problems facing the new administration, warned that unless the Indonesian leadership could provide evidence of quick economic progress, they ran the risk that the country would again 'accept Sukarno's slogans as a substitute for rice'.[4] Pursuing a similar theme, the Mercury[5] suggested that the 'military leaders have a sense of honesty and discipline, but with few exceptions they are not good civil administrators or politicians'. On this theme, perhaps more harshly, the Advertiser considered that:

> so far they [Indonesian leadership] have shown no stomach, let alone ability, for taking hold of this country's galloping economic problems. And, as for corruption, the Army itself has a not unspotted reputation.[6]

Generally speaking, however, at this point the media seemed to be in agreement that time would be the greatest judge of the new administration in Indonesia, and attempts by the new Indonesian Foreign Minister, Adam Malik -- described by the Sydney Morning Herald as a 'hard-headed realist', and the person most responsible for returning Indonesia back into the international community[7] --

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1 The Canberra Times, 13 February 1966.

2 The Canberra Times, 30 May 1966.

3 The Age, 14 April 1966.

4 The West Australian, 14 May 1966.

5 The Mercury, 16 March 1966.

6 The Advertiser, 14 March 1966.

7 The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 April 1968.

to bring an end to the confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia received particular praise from the Australian press.

Economic and Political Security: Problems and Prospects

With the removal of this seemingly great obstacle to cooperation between Australia and Indonesia, attention in the press shifted towards the prospect of the development of some kind of bilateral or other security arrangement between the two countries in light of Britain's imminent withdrawal from the region. The Sydney Morning Herald[1] reacted favourably to reported comments[2] from Malik and Indonesia's Ambassador to Australia, Lt. General R. Hidajat, to the effect that 'Indonesia would want to be a party to any security force for the area since Britain has withdrawn', by suggesting that, 'Australia would like to see Indonesia joining in defence arrangements'.

However, a gradual recognition of the reality of the situation, both from the perspective of Indonesia's domestic environment and ideological orientation, rapidly led to disillusionment on the part of the Australian press. In contrast to its earlier enthusiasm, the Sydney Morning Herald[3] turned to express concern over the fact that joint security arrangements might extend to matters of internal security, particularly with reference to West Irian. For Australia to become involved in stabilizing West Irian would be a contradiction in terms in that 'it would be difficult for Australia to put down a Papua Nationalist movement in West Irian while, at the same time encouraging the same thing in Papua New Guinea'.

From an ideological perspective, Grant was concerned about the divergence of Australian and Indonesian perceptions of regional security, particularly with regard to the role of the USA in Vietnam.[4] Grant also expressed anxiety over Malik's developing view that once Britain and the USA were to withdraw from Southeast Asia, Indonesian hegemony within the region would be assured.

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1 Ibid.

2 The Australian, 8 April 1968.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 18 April 1968.

4 The Age, 23 April 1968.

Subsequent suggestions by Suharto and Malik that ASEAN may develop a military capacity, and that Australia was not an Asian country, left certain sections of the media feeling as if Australia was in the process of being isolated militarily.

On a more practical level, Hastings seriously questioned the capacity of Indonesia to play at least a positive role, much less an important one, in the region in future, given the fundamental problems of internal stability and the structure of the Suharto Government.[1] He argued that the government would, over time, become more and more inclined towards military dictatorship, with the result that economic activity would be increasingly subordinated to political control. That Hastings' prediction gradually began to show fruit was, in general, a source of mounting frustration and disillusionment on the part of the Australian press, who expressed concern over the Suharto Government's domestic political, rather than economic, preoccupations.

At least initially, the press remained favourably disposed towards the Suharto Government, placing the blame for the continuing political instability on purposely disruptive elements such as the left, student movements, and Sukarno. However, the removal of Sukarno, whose popularity in Indonesia was still a force to be reckoned with, was, to a strong degree, seen to be the key to stability. Once he was removed from the political scene, economic reconstruction could begin unhindered, thereby allowing progress to occur at a rate which would be favourable to the greater part of Indonesian society. Yet forceful removal could, as one paper argued, 'produce a vast internal commotion amounting to civil war'.[2]

It is worth noting that the relatively sedate nature of Sukarno's later removal, in comparison with his flamboyant and dynamic political career, was the source of contradictory views held by the Australian press. While Sukarno's removal paved the way for Indonesia's much needed 'political and economic spring cleaning', it was also evident that his downfall was viewed with a great deal of sadness by the press, as if perceiving it to be a blow against idealism. In particular, recognition of Sukarno's

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1 The Australian, 1 May 1968.

2 The Northern Daily Leader, 14 January 1967.

efforts on behalf of the Indonesian revolution was characteristic of the somewhat eulogistic response of the press to Sukarno's downfall.

While it could be expected that Sukarno's removal, coupled with the essentially pragmatic nature of the new regime, would tend to create a situation which would be embraced approvingly by the Australian press, irregular incidents served to bring into question, albeit briefly, the integrity and cohesiveness of the Suharto government. Commenting on the instability of the new regime, the Advertiser suggested that 'the generals are kept together by [Sukarno's] economic ineptness and the bankruptcy into which he has led the republic'.[1] The Sunday Mail followed a similar line in response to continuing Indonesian aggression around and within Malaysia. Adopting a particularly cynical stance, it speculated that perhaps 'Jakarta approves of the clandestine raids but will disclaim all knowledge of them while a public relations campaign is exerted on the world to win forgiveness for past deeds and support for the future'.[2]

Generally speaking, however, this was a time for optimism and positive perceptions of the new government. Such views were reflected by the Age when, in criticizing negative views of Indonesia, it commented that 'it is more important to recognize Indonesia's change of heart in domestic and foreign policies than to seek devious motives behind particular manifestations of it'.[3] The fact that such views placed priority on the conservatism and pragmatism of the 'New Order' allowed the Australian press to take a conciliatory line toward apparent infringements of civil liberties in Indonesia. Thus, the Advertiser[4] was able to comment on the postponement of elections by Suharto as being 'not likely to worry anyone except for frustrated politicians and student leaders'. Of greater concern was the possible instability resulting from slow economic growth and a dearth of employment.

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1 The Advertiser, 7 July 1966.

2 The Sunday Mail, 9 October 1966.

3 The Age, 2 July 1966.

4 The Advertiser, 13 October 1967.

However, mounting frustration at the relatively slow progress of the Indonesian economy and the persistence of political instability began to take the form of increasing criticism. This was directed initially at such factors as cronyism and corruption,[1] which the Australian press saw was severing the lifeline of Indonesia, both economically, in the case of discouraging foreign investment, and politically, in the sense of antagonizing militant student groups.[2]

Increasingly, the government itself became the focus of criticism as the realities of military control became ever more apparent. Leading the vanguard was the Sydney Morning Herald, ironically one of the most ardent supporters of the new Suharto Government initially. As early as February 1968, the Sydney newspaper was slightly critical of Suharto's push to become President, without elections for the next five years.[3] More militant, although essentially still conciliatory in nature, the Sydney Morning Herald again attacked the Indonesian regime a month later, questioning Suharto's indefinite prolongation of his emergency powers, and putting to its readers that it was difficult to understand why he found it necessary to 'stack' the People's Congress with his supporters.[4]

This was followed in October 1968 by a warning that the use of execution as a means of controlling subversive factions carried with it the danger that the good name of Suharto could be damaged, precisely at a time when he was trying to develop it internationally.[5] It predicted that, for example, Indonesia's treatment of political prisoners was likely to have an extremely

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1 See Denis Warner's comments in the Sydney Morning Herald, 22 February 1967.

2 See the West Australian, 4 August 1967; the Canberra Times, 31 October 1967; the Examiner, 28 March 1967, 28 March 1967 and the Sydney Morning Herald, 8 January 1968.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 10 February 1968.

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 March 1968. In late 1968, the editor of the Sydney Morning Herald criticized Suharto over his decision not to recognize the freely elected leadership of the country's biggest political party, Parmusi (22 November 1968).

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 10 October 1968.

detrimental effect on negotiations with the Soviet Union, its largest creditor.[1] The Sydney Morning Herald's subtle criticisms seemed to question, increasingly, the morality of the Indonesian Government, echoing sentiments expressed in mid-1966 by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Australia (L. Aarons), when he condemned the massive execution of political prisoners by the Suharto regime.[2]

In spite of some minor criticisms, the tone of the Sydney Morning Herald, as was the case of the Australian press in general, had essentially been conciliatory. It would appear that during the three years from 1966 to 1968, press attention had focused almost exclusively on the problems and prospects for Indonesia following the advent of the new regime, and the implications for the region.[3] The tone had been generally enthusiastic and, to a certain extent, optimistic about the potential for the development of better relations between Australia and Indonesia. Yet, there had also been an understandable wariness, undoubtedly fostered by Indonesia's past record and continuing political instability. The press in Australia had, to a greater extent, stressed caution yet, at the same time, criticized any hesitancy on the part of the Australian Government to expand relations. Thus, the impression was given that it was a confusing period both for politicians and the media.

As the furor over the 'Act of Free Choice' and associated developments died down,[4] press attention again returned to focus on the comparatively leaden issues of economic progress and the potential for further expansion of Australia's relationship with Indonesia. A common theme in relation to the former was the

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 6 December 1968.

2 Letter to the Editor, the Sydney Morning Herald, 14 July 1966.

3 A particularly good analysis was published by Peter Hastings throughout June and July 1968, in the Australian (28 June 1968, 16 July 1968, 17 July 1968). See also editorial on 4 April 1968 which reflects on Hastings' June article and his argument that Indonesia was in a great deal of trouble economically. The editor concluded that if Indonesia was to lapse into its former state of instability, the region as a whole would be affected.

4 See Chapter Three.

effectiveness of the Suharto regime in stabilizing the economy and bringing a halt to rampant inflation.[1] Yet, this enthusiasm appeared to be somewhat tempered by an acknowledgement of negligible progress and the factors which were actively working against the efforts of the government. In this regard, Hastings, writing in the Australian in early 1970, suggested that:

> Indonesia's basic ills of a rundown economy are so bound up with intractable social and cultural attitudes and personal and corporate corruption that it is hard to establish the priorities of a national therapy.[2]

Bribery and corruption, as well as the vast extremes between wealth and poverty, were strong themes in a scathing article published in the Age by Federal MHR, Neil Brown.[3]

In what was the first public statement of criticism by a member of the government backbench, Brown focused, particularly, on the extent of corruption in Indonesia. While he considered that it was 'not the government's fault' Brown argued that it would obstruct efficient administration, deter foreign investment and prod 'continuous overseas criticism at a time when the government is engaged in a delicate exercise of image building'. Such criticism was not only restricted to structural problems in the Indonesian economy but also extended to the government itself. On the eve of President Suharto's visit to Australia in February 1972,[4] Hastings argued that while the achievements had been

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1 See among others, the Sydney Morning Herald, 5 January 1970, 8 May 1970; the Australian, 4 July 1971; the Age, 11 February 1970.

2 The Australian, 28 January 1970. The Financial Review, 17 February 1971 followed a similar line in a discussion on the potential rewards and problems related to investment in Indonesia. In particular, it outlined a number of dangers such as corruption, and arbitrary and outdated business laws which were serving to make potential investors understandably wary.

3 The newly-elected Liberal member for Diamond Valley, Victoria. The Age, 14 February 1970.

4 The purpose of his four-day visit from 6-9 February, was to 'find out what skills, know-how, capital, and material assistance may be furnished by the government in Canberra for the mammoth task of lifting his people towards even the most modest standards of this century' (the Review, 22 January 1972). See also the Courier Mail, 5 February 1972.

substantial, the Indonesian Government could be criticized on account of its 'occasional intellectual limitations, and the narrow framework in which development is perceived -- even economic development, which is too often considered good in itself without too much enquiry as to where it is heading'.[1]

The Imperatives of Closer Bilateral Relations

The realism which was increasingly evident in statements on economic development also found its way into perceptions of the nature of relations between Australia and Indonesia. As if in a warning of what was to follow in subsequent years, the Canberra Times[2] argued that, 'friendly relations cannot entail uncritical approval of all political structures and events'. Moreover, there was a growing recognition in the press of the marked discrepancies between Indonesian and Australian perceptions of security.[3] Grant[4] and Hastings went a step further, with the latter stating that 'basic common interests are hard to discover', and:

> the cause of relations between us is not being served by the pretence that we are both essentially Asian nations, one of whom happens to be rather more developed technologically than the other.[5]

However, conciliation and enthusiasm remained the dominant themes of the Australian press with regard to relations generally. This was reflected in the reaction to the seabed pact signed between the

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 27 January 1972. On the eve of Suharto's visit to Australia, Hastings, now with the Sydney Morning Herald, went to Indonesia to report on its most recent developments. He subsequently published two searching pieces in the Sydney Morning Herald (27 and 28 January 1972) and an interview with Suharto (31 January 1972).

2 The Canberra Times, 5 February 1972.

3 See among others, the Sydney Morning Herald, 3 October 1970 and a series of articles in the Australian by Hastings (28 January 1970 and 11 March 1970).

4 The Age, 17 August 1970.

5 See Hastings' excellent analysis of the Australian-Indonesian Conference (held at the ANU in May 1970) in the Australian (27 May 1970). See also Grant's article on the conference in the Age, 23 May 1970.

two countries,[1] and the offer, by the McMahon government, of sixteen Sabre jets to Indonesia.[2] On this note, also, the Australian press in general, were compelled to comment on the fact that whereas Australia was now donating surplus aircraft to Indonesia, a decade earlier it was frantically buying aircraft from the Americans in the belief that war with Indonesia was imminent. As the Sun Herald editorialized, 'A decade ago Indonesia was the benchmark against which we ordered our arms and armies, our most likely foe in the event of a war'.[3] Such a dramatic turn around was widely viewed as evidence of both the pragmatic nature of the Suharto Government and the development of friendly relations between the two countries.

A further case in point was the forementioned visit of President Suharto. While certain sections of the press expressed concern at the increasingly dictatorial nature of the Indonesian Government,[4] it was almost unanimous in condemning planned protests against Suharto over such issues as political prisoners and widespread brutality. In this vein, the Sydney Morning Herald stated in strong terms that 'left-wing plans here to try to embarrass President Suharto are nothing but deceitful and unscrupulous mischief-making in the communist interests'.[5]

While internal political developments in Indonesia commanded a relatively high degree of newspaper attention, they represented something of an enigma to the Australian press. Without doubt, the most attention focused on the proposed general elections of 1971,

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1 See the Sydney Morning Herald, 19 April 1971 and the Financial Review, 17 May 1971. In relation to the seabed pact, the Sydney Morning Herald commented 'the ease and the lack of fuss with which Indonesia and Australia have signed a mutual boundaries agreement aimed at avoiding future disputes over mineral searches indicate how close Jakarta-Canberra relations have become' (20 May 1971).

2 See, among others, the Age, 3 December 1971 and the Courier Mail, 4 December 1971. Similarly, the Sydney Morning Herald's editorial saw the gift of Sabre jets as evidence of 'the increasingly close relations which have developed' (2 December 1971).

3 The Sun Herald, 6 February 1972.

4 See, for example, the Canberra Times, 3 November 1970.

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 February 1972.

and the attempt by the government to ensure victory.[1] Adopting a realist stance, the Sydney Morning Herald accepted that the elections meant 'continuing government by army and bureaucrats in dialogue with the intellectuals and elites', rather than a 'return to the chaos of earlier years with its possibility of communist (PKI) exploitation'.[2] This was a theme that was widely repeated as was the view that, 'it is not the way the elections are being conducted that counts; it is the fact that they are being held at all'.[3]

In general, however, the press could not help but be concerned at the 'win at any cost' and 'bulldozing'[4] tactics employed by the government and the army. The Canberra Times, for example, argued that, 'the pressures now being used by government and army officials, including intimidation and assorted tough tactics, to promote Sekber Golkar have rightly drawn criticism'.[5] Overwhelmingly though, the attitude of the press was that despite the distastefulness of such tactics, the end result would tend to justify the means. In this regard, the Northern Daily Leader[6] suggested that, following the Golkar victory, 'the continuance of the Suharto regime will be a satisfactory outcome from our point of view'. To this, Rohan Rivett, writing for the Sunday Review, added that since a vote for Golkar was a vote against returning to the chaos of the past, 'most advanced thinking in Indonesia supported Suharto and the Golkar experiment'.[7] Besides, according to the Canberra Times, this would be 'the first step in a return to free

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1 The Australian, 23 April 1971, 30 June 1971, 9 July 1971; the Age, 4 January 1971, 22 June 1971; the Sydney Morning Herald, 16 February 1971; the Financial Review, 18 February 1971; the Sunday Review 21 March 1971.

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 May 1971.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 3 July 1971.

4 Peter McCawley, at the time a Research Scholar at ANU, used such a term in an article published by the National Times, 2-7 August 1971.

5 The Canberra Times, 15 June 1971.

6 The Northern Daily Leader, 6 July 1971.

7 The Sunday Review, 23 July 1971.

and fully representative elections'.[1]

However, it became increasingly clear that, as the Indonesian Government assumed steadily tighter control, the conciliatory nature of the Australian press had its limits. In February 1972, the Canberra Times criticized the Suharto regime's inability to deal satisfactorily with growing internal dissent by suggesting that Suharto's 'uncharacteristic overreaction to what was originally a miniscule problem may generate the very forces he had hoped to suppress'.[2] Some concern, also, was expressed in certain sections of the press over the post-election reorganization of the Indonesian Parliament which essentially turned it into little more than a 'rubber stamp' for Suharto's policies.

It would appear that the Australian press in general perpetuated a conciliatory and optimistic attitude toward Indonesia, with some qualifications. This was understandable when viewed in the sense that friction over West Irian did nothing to change Australian perceptions of Indonesia's regional value. Indeed, it may have served to enhance it. As Grant argued at the ANU Conference on Australia and Indonesia in mid-1970, and reported in the Canberra Times, 'an Australian security role of any kind in Southeast Asia was impossible without the assent of Indonesia'.[3] Similarly, the Sydney Morning Herald referred to Indonesia as 'the single most important element in maintaining regional stability' and suggested that, 'in the long run our Asian policies as a whole are most likely to be judged most keenly by our relations with Indonesia'.[4]

The election of the Whitlam Labor Government in December 1972 did little, according to the Australian press, to change the nature or conduct of these relations.[5] Essentially, this was because this issue was one area in which Liberal and Labor policy was

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1 The Canberra Times, 15 June 1971.

2 The Canberra Times, 14 February 1972.

3 The Canberra Times, 20 May 1970.

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 February 1972.

5 See, among others, the Age, 11 January 1973, 12 March 1973, 14 May 1973; the Sydney Morning Herald, 15 January 1973, 6 April 1973; the Financial Review, 23 March 1973.

bipartisan. Thus, press perceptions and attitudes seemed, at least with regard to such issues as economic development and investment and corruption, to display a continuity which essentially transcended the change in government.[1] Yet, there appeared to be a degree of concern over the manner in which Whitlam, as both Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister, perceived and conducted the relationship with Indonesia.[2]

Early in 1973, Warner suggested in the Sydney Morning Herald[3] that the traditional 'threat from the north' analysis which had, in one way or another, always figured in governmental policy towards Indonesia 'simply did not figure in Mr Whitlam's policy thinking, or at least not in his policy statements'. Similarly, concern was expressed over the possible implications of the government's recognition of the People's Republic of China for the relationship with Indonesia.[4] In this regard, the Sydney Morning Herald reported that Whitlam's visit to Asia, and Indonesia, in particular, was less 'an exercise in international courtesy', as a move to 'dispel any notions of a future Canberra-Peking axis'.[5]

Whitlam's visit was perceived favourably by the Australian press and widely applauded[6] as symbolic of the importance of Indonesia to Australia, and the close relations that existed between the two countries. However, his initiatives relating to the establishment of a regional grouping incorporating the newly recognized China, were viewed much less enthusiastically. The Mercury, for example, and representative of much press comment, suggested that Whitlam was naive, and 'obviously needs to do a lot

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1 See, for example, the Age, 14 May 1973, 23-24-25 July 1973; the Sydney Morning Herald, 5 November 1973.

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 February 1973; The Australian, 24 February 1973, 27 February 1973 (Alan Ramsey); The Age, 26 February 1973 (Burns), 24 February 1973 (Barnes).

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 26 February 1973.

4 Age 10 February 1973 (Denis Warner); Financial Review, 16 October 1973.

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 February 1973.

6 The Sydney Morning Herald 15 January 1973; the Financial Review, 1 February 1973; the Age, 19 February 1973.

more thinking about the affairs and feelings of Australia's neighbours before launching his more fanciful ideas on foreign affairs'.[1] The subsequent rejection of Whitlam's proposals by Indonesian officials thus came as no surprise to the Australian press.

However, there was some degree of contention over with whom the blame rested for the rejection. While certain sections of the press criticized the Australian Prime Minister for his naivety and lack of understanding, Indonesia was also singled out. Adopting a conciliatory, though pragmatic line, the Age argued that 'the present regime in Jakarta is unlikely to engage in daring initiatives until it has settled certain basic problems'.[2] More cynically, Solomon, writing in the Canberra Times,[3] suggested that fear of losing its dominant position in the region was the primary motivation behind the rejection of the Whitlam initiatives. In essence, 'they conflict[ed] with Indonesia's desires to be the biggest fish in the Southeast Asian pool, and [Indonesia] does not want Australia coming in and upsetting this'.[4]

Emerging Antagonism

If Whitlam's visit was designed to enhance relations between Australia and Indonesia, then it became increasingly apparent towards the end of 1973 that the reverse was occurring. A series of trenchant and damning articles[5] on Indonesian politics by Neil

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1 The Mercury, 22 February 1973. For an account of this episode see David Solomon, the Canberra Times, 22 February 1973; Brian Johns, the Sydney Morning Herald, 23 February 1973; the Sydney Morning Herald, 23 February 1973, 24 February 1973; Alan Barnes, the Age, 24 February 1973.

2 The Age, 24 February 1973.

3 The Canberra Times, 26 February 1973.

4 See interesting comments made in the Economist (3 March 1973) which considered, among other things, 'The Indonesians like being the big fish in the ASEAN puddle... they do not want to be dwarfed by Japan and China in an inclusive Asian pool'.

5 The Age, Don Chipp, "Indonesia: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow": Part One: "Affection, respect fly out the window" (23 July 1972); Part Two: "Cruelty on our doorstep" (24 July 1973); Part Three: "People starve, as regime gets fatter" (25 July 1973).

Brown's parliamentary colleague, Liberal MP, Don Chipp, served as a partial catalyst towards a heightening of antagonism between the two countries. Chipp did not write anything unique on such issues as corruption and political suppression but expanded upon themes that were, by this time, relatively familiar in the press, academic writings[1] and the Australian Parliament.[2]

Chipp tended to adopt an openly antagonistic line towards the Suharto regime, in contrast to the essentially conciliatory one which had been largely espoused previously. Referring to government in Indonesia as a 'ruling junta', supported by the 'useless institution which they call Parliament',[3] Chipp argued that 'corruption and graft are as bad, if not worse than under Sukarno's regime. They are now openly practised on the surface'.[4] He then recommended that the 'New Order' be required to 'do something new first' before foreign aid be forthcoming.[5] Further, he criticized the Australian press and public by suggesting that, with regard to political prisoners, they 'allow these hideous assaults on human rights in our nearest neighbouring country to be perpetuated without raising a voice in protest or anger'.[6]

While there was a mixed press and public response to the Chipp articles,[7] there seemed to be little difference of opinion over whether or not they would affect relations. Michael Richardson wrote in the Financial Review[8] that the articles were perceived in Indonesia as a 'damaging interference in the internal affairs of

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1 See Chapter Six.

2 See Chapter Five.

3 The Age, 25 July 1973.

4 The Age, 23 July 1973.

5 The Age, 25 July 1973.

6 The Age, 24 July 1973.

7 See for example, Creighton Burns' reaction in the Age, 27 July 1973, and a letter to the Editor of the Age (7 August 1973) from Ken Ward. Ward, of Monash University, was a co-author of the book Showcase State, published that year. See also, Peter Hastings' article "Indonesia at Crisis Point...III", the Sydney Morning Herald, 17 March 1974.

8 The Financial Review, 16 October 1973.

friendly states'. More importantly, Indonesia saw it 'as a lingering tendency to deal with Asia in hectoring, standover terms from a self-assumed pedestal of Western superiority'. Similarly, other factors -- such as the very nature of the Whitlam government -- were becoming gradually conducive towards the emergence of an 'underlying and potentially serious tension' in the relationship, described by Whitlam as being of 'paramount importance' to both countries.

Generally speaking, however, press attitudes towards Indonesia, as evidenced by a series of almost patronising articles by Peter Hastings in the Sydney Morning Herald in November 1973, remained essentially conciliatory.[1] Apart from the controversial Chipp articles, and a growing but still relatively minor degree of criticism over the existence and treatment of political prisoners, attention continued to be focused on relatively mundane issues such as economic and political development and the implications for Australia of Whitlam's efforts in the diplomatic arena.

The following six months were to prove eventful. The visit to Indonesia in January 1974 of Japan's Prime Minister, Tanaka, and the overthrow of the Portuguese dictatorship under President Caetano three months later, sent shockwaves, respectively, through Jakarta and the Portuguese colony of East Timor. The former occupied the Australian press for months, with firsthand accounts of the ensuing riots in Jakarta.[2] However, this was quickly overshadowed by thoughtful, and in some cases concerned analyses of their long-term domestic and regional implications. The latter theme was prominent in press interest, as it turned increasingly to interpretations of events in Portugal and, by implication, East Timor. The latter quickly displaced the Tanaka incident and was to stay firmly entrenched in press perceptions for the next five years.

> The Age considered that the riots in Jakarta reflected a:
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> simmering resentment at the increasingly big role of foreign investment generally in a society with continuing extremes of wealth and poverty which the capital from

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 and 6 November 1973.

2 See, among others, the Sydney Morning Herald, 17 January 1974, 18 January 1974; the Age, 17 January 1973, 18 January 1974; the Australian, 17 January 1974; the National Times, 21 January 1974.

abroad is doing little to reduce.[1]

While this interpretation of events was widely embraced editorially,[2] sections of the press began to question the 'New Order's' economic policies and their domestic implication for Australia's long-term security interests.

At the forefront of criticism of the regime's economic direction was Hastings who, writing in a series of articles in the Sydney Morning Herald, felt compelled to suggest that not only had 'the sheer success of the New Order Government's economic policies ... created a host of social ills with which nobody seems able to cope', but, more importantly, 'something has been going wrong with the New Order Government's sense of direction and priorities for some time past'.[3] Nevertheless, the January riots did little to persuade the Indonesian Government into constructive and sustained action to cope with the clearly mounting social and economic frustration. Rather, there was 'considerable recourse to repressive measures', with the government detaining intellectuals, academics, and student leaders on charges of 'conspiracy'.[4] While Hastings subsequently conceded that 'the government and its official apologists are clearly embarrassed by their inability to

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1 The Age, 17 January 1974.

2 The Financial Review, 17 January 1974; the Examiner, 17 January 1974; the Australian, 17 January 1974; the West Australian, 18 January 1974.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 March 1974. See Rohan Rivett's similar analysis in the National Review, 1-7 February 1974.

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 27 April 1974. Forty Australian academics signed a petition, some months later, urging the Whitlam Government to protect the democratic rights of all Indonesians in Australia. The academics accused the Indonesian Government of gross interference with their freedom of speech in Australia by reprisals it took against Professor Ernst Utrecht, a professor of international law at the University of Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur. Utrecht had made a three-week visit to Australia in March, during which he was strongly critical of the Suharto regime. The academics alleged Utrecht was subsequently sacked from his post due to Indonesian pressure on the Malaysian Government. The Australian's editorial (20 June 1973) called on the Australian Government to 'explain to the Jakarta Government that, where democratic rights are concerned, we cannot tolerate the victimization of Indonesians who come here as our guests'.

prove conspiracy links between detainees and the January riots', he called for an understanding of the Suharto regime's preoccupation with security issues, geo-strategic and ethnic factors, and the direction of political developments over the previous decade.[1]

Some in the press ventured to examine in detail the underlying forces behind the riots. On one level, attention centred on the racist nature of the demonstrations, as it became clear that protestors directed attention not only at the Japanese but also the local Chinese -- considered by the editor of the Courier Mail to have been 'traditional victims of Indonesian hostility'.[2] On another level, sections of the press discerned the presence of a factional struggle within the highest circles of government. Of particular interest was the attention given to on-going rumours of rivalry[3] between Major General Ali Murtopo (a senior adviser to President Suharto)[4] and General Sumitro (Head of Kopkamtib[5] and Deputy Commander of the Armed Forces). The Australian[6] indicated that there were signs that students involved in the disturbances had received encouragement from Sumitro, and it appeared that they thus represented not an attempt to overthrow the regime but merely the manoeuvreing for position of different groups within it.[7]

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 27 April 1974.

2 The Courier Mail, 18 January 1974.

3 The situation had arisen where officers engaged in strictly military tasks tended to regard Murtopo's more 'political' role, and his special access to Suharto, with suspicion. Cutting across these rivalries between 'political' and 'professional' generals were ethnic and regional feelings arising from the comparative dominance of officers of Central Java's Diponegoro Division, which was once commanded by Suharto.

4 Murtopo was head of Opsus (Special Operations) and on Suharto's personal staff (Aspri).

5 Command for Restoration of Security and Order (Komando Pemulihan Keamanan dan Keteriban).

6 The Australian, 17 January 1974. See also the Age, 19 January 1974, the National Times, 21 January 1974 and the Sydney Morning Herald, 5 and 6 March 1974.

7 The outcome was a general reshuffle of top positions including the removal of Sumitro as Commander of Kopkamtib. In March 1975, he resigned as Deputy Commander of the Armed

Concern over the implications of these events for Australian security were also expressed in other newspapers. The Financial Review,[1] for example, called for 'a serious look at the question of whether a more neutral attitude to whoever is in power in Indonesia would conflict with Australia's long-term interests'. Hastings indicated in the Sydney Morning Herald that there was not only 'a need for Australians and Indonesians to consider their relationship and where it is taking them', but also 'how far either side can go with the other'. In essence:

> Australia needs to think about its neighbour a little more objectively than it has in the past as the single most important of its foreign policy problems ... because of its undoubted ability to involve all neighbouring powers in its messy activities. Indonesia is an uncomfortable neighbour on any assessment and under any government.[2]

Conclusion

Press reporting of developments in Indonesia during this nine-year period was thorough and comprehensive -- often undiscriminately so, particularly in the three years following the coup. While it could be argued that the press provided a forum for debate and attempted to inform domestic opinion, reporting of developments in the 1965-68 period generally did not provide the basis for clear and relevant policy discussion. In the immediate post-coup period for instance, the press gave varying but sensational attention to the power struggle taking place in Jakarta, and newspaper editorials left the resulting muddled picture undisturbed. It was not until the political dust settled that editorials attempted to describe and evaluate the issues arising from Indonesia's internal disorders and her move towards economic rehabilitation.

It could not be argued, however, that the press underrated the problems facing Indonesia while perhaps exaggerating the importance of an Australian role in providing assistance. In terms of the

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Forces. Murtopo retained his Opsus, which led McDonald to consider that his role in Sumitro's downfall was 'apparent although indefinable'. McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.140.

1 The Financial Review, 17 January 1974.

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 March 1974.

former, the Sydney Morning Herald and the Age saw Sukarno as the major obstacle to any practicable solutions in Indonesia. Others considered that Sukarno was Indonesia and counselled caution and patience. While the Sydney Morning Herald was unsuccessful in swaying the Australian Government away from its cautious policies, it was -- at a time when the British were withdrawing from the region and discussing the prospects of entering the European Economic Community -- effective in stimulating a general awareness in the press of Indonesia's potential role in Australia's national interests, in both the strategic and trade arenas. However, while such issues dominated the views of the Sydney Morning Herald and the Age, the Canberra Times (and sometimes the Age) were at the forefront of a number of newspapers which were more concerned with the humanitarian aspects of developments in Indonesia, and in this context, supported the Australian Government's inclination to tread carefully.

The continuing power struggle, however, increasingly disturbed all these newspapers, as well as the Mercury, the Advertiser and the West Australian. This gave rise to a period in which there was considerable interplay between the press and government on the major issue of economic development, and sustained criticism by the press of the government's reticence to assist Indonesia economically, spilled over into the Australian business arena. Many in the press found it incredible that the Australian Government, as preoccupied with regional security as the L-CP coalition then was, was not prepared to contribute to such security through assistance to Indonesia. Inevitably, press appreciation of the government's policies became increasingly negative and there is no reason to believe that this did not reinforce similar perceptions within the wider Australian community.

The Sydney Morning Herald was undoubtedly the most vocal and forceful exponent of this argument. It repeatedly called, patronisingly at times, for a more intense Australian effort to assist Indonesia, and gave full support to all measures which were designed to rehabilitate the country. Not content with merely advocating economic assistance, the Sydney Morning Herald proposed a security arrangement between Australia and Indonesia. While such a view was widely criticized, it may have been of major influence in the Australian Government's subsequent examination and proposal of such an alliance within the year. For the Sydney Morning

Herald, security and ideological reasons prevailed and were to underwrite its appraisals of Indonesian issues through to 1972, and Suharto's first visit to Australia.

However, most of the press avoided such an extreme position as that adopted by the Sydney Morning Herald, and it was here that seasoned correspondents such as Palmos, Grant and, ironically, Hastings played a role. Their interpretative appraisals confronted the substantive issues being generated by Indonesia's drive towards political and economic stability. Paradoxically, it was Hastings who expressed the earliest concern about this process and the Suharto government's preoccupation with domestic political control.

However, optimism prevailed and the imperatives and implications of the ideological changes that had taken place in Indonesia gave rise to press views that stressed pragmatism, while taking a conciliatory line toward Indonesia's increasingly hardening domestic policies. In such a situation, the press created a climate in which the government would have been encouraged to maintain the course of its Indonesia policies.

By the early 1970s, a number of dissenting government MPs had formed links with the press, in particular, the Age, and the Melbourne daily was instrumental in raising questions not only about the performance of the Indonesian Government but also about the nature of its relationship with Australia. Catalytic here were the views of Don Chipp, which sowed the seed of Indonesian discontent with the press' role in Australia-Indonesia relations. Such views as they developed in the narrower institutional environment of the Australian Parliament are now examined.

CHAPTER FIVE

BIPARTISAN INTEREST: THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE (1965-74)

Introduction

This chapter describes and analyses the attitudes within the Federal Parliament on Indonesian issues between 1965 and 1974. The principal issue examined is Indonesia's economic and political transformation and the bearing it would have on regional security.[1] In the immediate post-coup period, economic development was debated more than anything else in terms of Indonesia's stability and its vulnerability to communism. Also of fundamental importance was the enhancement of Indonesia's status as a regional power and the implications of such a strategy for Australia's future defence and security interests. However, by the early 1970s, the debate was placing emphasis less on ideological and short-term political considerations than on economic and humanitarian factors.

The concern here is with the extent of the Parliament's interest in particular issues and the debate's main features, including the differences between Government and Opposition parties. This approach enables an assessment to be made of the influence exercised by Parliament and the major political parties in the formulation of Australia's Indonesian policy. It also provides a perspective to view the development of this issue outside the parliamentary arena, and to make judgements about the nexus between Parliament and the wider community.

Beginning of the 'New Order'

In the period from the coup up until the MPR election of Suharto to the Presidency in March 1968, Australia's understanding of events in Indonesia, and government policy towards that country, were not particularly informed by the level or intensity of debate in the Federal Parliament. Although a lack of knowledge and understanding of events, as they unfolded, was a feature of this

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[1] The other issues that concerned the Parliament, but to a lesser degree, included political prisoners and the West New Guinea 'Act of Free Choice'.

thirty month period, three main concerns were nevertheless expressed: the make-up of the new government in Indonesia, the direction it would take, and its disposition toward Australia. Other more immediate and humanitarian concerns related to the state of the Indonesian nation and the plight of its people.

While the tone for official responses to the coup prior to the conclusion of confrontation in August 1967 was set by Hasluck's statement to the House of Representatives on 19 October 1965, as noted earlier,[1] the Minister was circumspect in his observations of events in Indonesia. Indeed, even in response to opposition probing[2] only a week before, while not prepared to speculate on the future shape of the Indonesian Government following such an upheaval, Hasluck noted the fluidity and uncertainties of the political situation, and maintained that Australia was 'deeply interested in the stability, prosperity and social welfare of the people of Indonesia'.[3]

Hasluck repeated these points in his 19 October statement.[4] But attention was diverted on this occasion away from a much needed interpretation of events in Indonesia, and their implications, with Hasluck preferring to make strong references -- which were to underwrite the debate conducted by the political parties for the next seven years -- to Communist activities in Indonesia and the destructive role of the PKI in the coup, the growing concern in Indonesia over the country's stagnating economic situation, and the need for economic reconstruction and development.[5] Hasluck also confirmed that the government would stand firm on its policy on confrontation, yet intimated that should this 'one occasion of conflict be removed there are many ways in which we could work together for mutual benefit'. As he was to repeat to the House of Representatives on 10 March 1966, cloaking the political

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1 See Chapter Two, pp.55-56.

2 Question from G.M. Gray (ALP Member for Capricornia, Qld).

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.48, p.1651, 12 October 1965.

4 The same speech was read in the Senate by Senator John Gorton. CPD, Senate, Vol.5, 20 October 1965, pp.1048-1051.

5 Ibid., H.R., Vol.48, p.1914, 19 October 1965.

necessities of the situation with a humanitarian concern, 'There is ... a formidable task to be done in concentrating resources, both human and material, on domestic construction and development. The longer this is postponed, the harder the task will be'.[1]

Meanwhile, government spokespersons had to fend off questions from both sides of the House of Representatives, and of the Senate, although question time served to provide an opportunity for both Labor members and government backbenchers alike to highlight and condemn the situation in Indonesia. Generally, the Labor Opposition shared the government's outlook on early developments in post-coup Indonesia, with the Leader of the Opposition, A.A. Calwell, at the forefront. He held that Australia's interests lay in 'a stable Indonesia, developing for the welfare of all her people ... without interference from her neighbours and without interference on her part with [sic] her neighbours'.[2] Communism concerned Calwell who was strongly anti-Communist, and he considered that the only way to defeat it was through economic, rather than military, means. This view was supported by others who were keen to undermine the appeal of Communism, and called for the Indonesians to put economics before politics by pursuing 'proper land reform, education and administration aimed at improving the lot of the lower classes, and not by perpetuating a hierarchy which is of use only to itself'.[3] K.E. Beazley, who also shared such philosophies, provided a clearer and more rational framework for such views, when, in drawing parallels with America's post-war Marshall Plan in Europe, he said:

> economic aid achieves much in the world, depending on the motive from which it is given, and provided the motivation gets across to the recipient.

In this context, Beazley had a different perspective from that of his leader and considered it was wrong that the Marshall Plan had become regarded as a form of anti-Communist propaganda -- 'a hope that if a monetary grant is made to a country, its policy can be bought' -- and directed criticism at Hasluck's condition, somewhat in the same vein, that an extension of an Australian hand depended

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.50, p.180, 10 March 1966.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.48, p.1916, 19 October 1965.

3 E.W. Harding (Labor Member for Herbert, Qld). CPD, H.R., Vol.50, p.852, 31 March 1966.

on the winding down of confrontation.[1]

It was not until the change of regime in Indonesia following the signing of the 11 March Order (1966) that the debate in the Parliament became pungent. In an attempt to transform the rather confined debate, and frustrated by the events of the previous six months within Indonesia, Liberal backbenchers and Ministers became considerably less inhibited in their attacks on the actions of the Communists in Indonesia, and so reintroduced an inveterate theme in the Indonesian debate between the parties.[2] Even the Minister for Trade and Industry, John McEwen,[3] was driven to say:

> We can gauge Australia's feelings about the whole problem of Communist encroachment in Southeast Asia and our own instinctive concern with our own security by considering for a moment the reaction of Australians to the displacement of the pro-Communists in Indonesia. No-one would deny that there has been a wave of relief throughout Australia at the turn of events.[4]

Such a statement drew strong criticism from the Opposition, in particular, Dr J.F. Cairns, who levelled criticism at a Minister who, while extolling 'the extraordinary danger which his country faces from China[,]... presided over the sale of $500 million worth of wool and wheat to that country' and 'the sale of $100 million worth of metal ...'. While Cairns argued that a Communist victory in Indonesia may have been unfortunate for political developments in Australia, he distanced himself from McEwen's generalizations, warning that he did not welcome the victory of a regime which would be able to institute a military dictatorship in the future.[5]

Clearly, while views from both sides of the House of

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.48, pp.2128-2129, 21 October 1965.

2 Sir Keith Wilson (the Liberal Member for Sturt) was the first to trigger this post-coup phase of the debate when he told the House of Representatives of the actions of the 'murderous group of Communists who were backed by the Chinese Communists in attempting to take over the country [Indonesia]'. CPD, H.R., Vol.50, p.303, 16 March 1966.

3 Later Sir John McEwen.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.50, p.450, 22 March 1966.

5 CPD, H.R., Vol.50, pp.451-452. Similar sentiments were expressed by Victoria's ALP representative in the Senate, Senator Cohen. Ibid., Senate, S.31, 30 March 1966, p.351.

Representatives[1] embraced a strong ideological element, Labor members displayed, as did the Minister for External Affairs, a concern for the welfare of the Indonesian people, and hence seemed to possess a more balanced approach to reconciling the ideological and moral assumptions of their arguments. However, for Liberal members, the moral dimension became increasingly absent. Events in Indonesia provided them with the opportunity to praise the new regime, with wider reference, in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, to the government's anti-Communist strategy in Asia and the respective roles of the USA and Britain in the overall policy of 'containment' in Southeast Asia. Thus, as Defence Minister Fairhall said to the House of Representatives in early May 1966, and which was a theme to emerge persistently from the government's side in both Chambers into the 1970s:

> There is no denying that resistance to Communist aggression in Southeast Asia has stiffened in the free countries of the Asian continent. Who can deny that the efforts of the United States, ourselves and our allies in Vietnam have contributed very largely to the situation which resulted in the Communists being thrown out of Indonesia.[2]

However, the Labor Opposition were to deny the validity of such a view. Whitlam, in particular, was quick to point out the irony of a situation in which, prior to the 1966 Federal elections, the bogey for the conservative government in Australia was not Communist aggression in Vietnam, but Indonesia. He described the government's attitude and policies then as 'utterly negative and obstructive',[3] and inevitably conducive towards decisions like the purchase of the F-111 military aircraft and the institution of conscription; decisions he was to later describe as having 'been two disasters of a solely military nature'.[4] Therefore, in noting the difficulty which government members had in reconciling their position on Indonesia, both prior to and following the coup,

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1 See also the debate in the Senate involving Senators Mulvihill, Henty and Turnbull. Ibid., 31 March 1966, p.403 and p.407. This debate went into April involving Senators Davidson, Webster and Dittmer. Ibid., 20 April 1966, pp.454, 459 and 544.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.51, p.1642, 10 May 1966.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.51, p.1643, 10 May 1966.

4 Ibid., Vol.69, p.1148, 15 September 1970.

Whitlam had identified an ambivalence that was to be constantly attacked by the Opposition during the next six years.

Post-Confrontation

Hasluck's first statement,[1] after the end of confrontation and following his first trip to Indonesia in August, provided the foundation for the government's attitude and, with modifications, its policies for the next six years. Endorsing an earlier view that confrontation had to cease before cooperative efforts on reconstruction could occur (drawing comparisons with Vietnam), he etched a framework in which the long-term task of economic rehabilitation and reconstruction was central to his desire to promote stable and progressive conditions in the region. Integral to this was the need for the Indonesian Government to recognize the importance of mapping out an economic rehabilitation programme. It was agreed during his visit that there was, in the short term, a number of concerns to be addressed. On one level, there was a need to revitalize industries and basic services while, on another, there was a requirement for Indonesia to stabilize obligations relating to the West Irian - Papua New Guinea border, including (by 1969) the 'Act of Free Choice' in West Irian.[2]

Hasluck's second visit to Indonesia in January 1967, provided him with the opportunity to build on this accord, and enabled him to publicly achieve a clearer and more authoritative understanding of events as they had transpired since the coup. On 28 February, as noted earlier,[3] the External Affairs Minister informed the House of Representatives of the political situation in Indonesia, of its transitory nature, and the difficulties implicit in such a situation. However, on the developing political level, he was not able to provide too many details. Despite expressing Australia's sympathies with the Indonesian Government's broad objective to strengthen the role of the country's representative institutions in the formulation of government policy,[4] Hasluck was reticent in making any comments on Indonesia's future political arrangements.

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1 Ibid., Vol.52, p.223, 18 August 1966.

2 See Chapter Three.

3 See Chapter Two, p.69.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.54, p.198, 28 February 1967.

On economic matters, he was less restrained, informing the Parliament in detail of the enormous task that lay ahead for the Indonesian Government, and of the implications for Australia's 'material self-interest' if such a task were to be successfully achieved. Although not in the context of government-to-government dealings, Hasluck also raised the value of personal contacts, a notion the government itself was to embrace in the years to come and one that was to become the focus of broad criticism in the early 1970s.

This outlook immediately set the pattern for subsequent government policy and the parliamentary debate on Indonesian matters. For the conservative parties, Hasluck's concept of 'material self-interest' overshadowed a concern for the welfare of the Indonesian people. Underwriting this concern was the ever present ideological preoccupation.[1] In its mildest form, W.T. Arthur, in extolling the virtues of a role for Australia in the region, told the House of Representatives, in early March 1967, that:

> Australia is in a unique position ... On the one hand, the Asians have a Red China, extolling the philosophy of world revolution and preaching the doctrine that power comes out of the mouth of a gun. On the other hand is Australia, together with America and the other treaty signatories, who seek to guarantee Asia its freedom and who ask nothing in return. This places us in a unique position, and one which I know Australia will treat as a sacred trust.[2]

W.C. Harworth[3] had also said six months earlier:

> the need for long term and ambitious plans for economic assistance to Indonesia is essential ... There are no grounds for complacency in this part of Southeast Asia. The great test is in the days to come. There are very great dangers there ... In a run down economy, such as exists in Indonesia, people are apt to become impatient and to create troubles. We shall have to assist in every way we can to prevent such happenings. We must do it

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.63, p.2181, 22 May 1969. See also similar comments expressed by Senator J.L. Cavanagh, Ibid., Senate, S.32, 25 August 1966, p.129.

2 Ibid., Vol.54, pp.345-346, 2 March 1967.

3 The Liberal Member for Isaacs, Victoria.

quickly ....[1]

For the Opposition, however, the Government was not acting quickly enough. This conviction, and the underlying ideological preoccupations of the conservative parties, precipitated in the immediate post-confrontation period dour criticisms that were to mark the Opposition debate on Indonesian issues into the 1970s. For Whitlam, the government's inertia in offering economic assistance to Indonesia was magnified by the amount that the government was spending on Australia's military commitment in Vietnam. As he lamented on 25 August 1966, in an early indication of his perceptions regarding Indonesia and its standing in Australia's national interests:

> What are we going to do in Indonesia? Indonesia is the country in which we can have more influence than in any other country in our region ... which will be the most significant in our region. Once again, we are virtually ignoring Indonesia. We are missing the second chance.[2]

For Whitlam six months later:

> There could be no better, or rather clearer, illustration of the government's shortsighted preoccupations, amounting to an obsession, with military means and military methods as our sole concern and interest in Asia than its attitude to recent developments in Indonesia ... the government heaves a collective sigh of relief and proceeds to lose interest in Indonesia ... Yet Indonesia is a country of 100 million people, our nearest neighbour and a country that has barely escaped, after terrible turmoil a convulsion, from the threat of Communist domination.[3]

Cynicism soon emerged as a characteristic feature of many of Whitlam's early comments on Australia's contribution to Indonesia's

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.52, p.685, 1 September 1966. See also speeches by H.J. Bate (Liberal Member for Macarthur, NSW); Ibid., pp.740-741, 1 September 1966; J.E. Lucock (CP Member for Lyne, NSW). To a lesser degree see J. Corbett (CP Member for Maranoa, Qld); Ibid., Vol.56, p.796, 5 September 1967.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.52, p.483, 25 August 1966. This was also a strong theme in a speech Whitlam gave to a public meeting in Young, N.S.W., on 30 May 1966 (See The Sydney Morning Herald, 31 May 1966).

3 Ibid., Vol.54, pp.207-208, 28 February 1967.

rehabilitation.[1] Not even Treasurer McMahon's Budget Speech later in the year (1967), in which the government allocated $5.2 million -- to be utilized through the Bonus Export (BE) System, a mechanism devised by the Indonesian Government to allocate the proceeds of foreign exchange receipts to Indonesian importers[2] -- dampened his criticisms. In a Parliamentary debate on international affairs at the same time he argued, 'We were not there helping when the help was needed ... we held back in helping Indonesia throughout the last financial year when many other countries ... contributed more than Australia did. Was their interest greater than Australia's?'[3] This line of argument, used intermittently by Whitlam,[4] continued into 1969.

Other Labor Members too were dissatisfied. Senator Keefe, in broader terms, was critical of the explicit self-interest inherent in government decisions in the aid arena; in particular, that recipients of Australia's aid were chosen on the basis of the government's own security needs, resulting in the most urgent needs not being addressed.[5] Beazley had expanded on this theme earlier

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1 Whitlam's understanding of our contribution in 1966 was that it amounted to sending 'some lamp black for tyres' (CPD, H.R., Vol.52, p.483, 25 August 1966). In 1967 he was on record as saying an offer of $200,000 on top of Australia's $1.5 million total aid package for the 1966-67 allocation was 'slightly more than the sum subscribed in a telethon ... in less than twenty-four hours ...', drawing him to conclude 'the contrast between the private generosity of Australians and the public parsimony of their elected Government is humiliating' (Ibid., Vol.54, p.208, 28 February 1967).

2 This scheme was the subject of criticism and debate in September because of the 'tied' nature of aid. See CPD, H.R., Vol.57, pp.1802-1805, 5 October 1967. In the Senate, see the speech by Senator Heatley (Liberal, Qld), Ibid., Senate, S.33, 1 March 1967, pp.220-221.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.56 p.221, 17 August 1967.

4 Whitlam pursued this line of argument through Questions in the House of Representatives, principally to External Affairs Ministers Hasluck and Freeth. (Ibid., Vol.60, p.1343, 19 September 1968. Ibid., Vol.62, p.379, 4 March 1969). References also were made to it in broader debates (See for example Ibid., p.902, 26 March 1969). The government's position on aid to Indonesia was defended stoutly by Gorton (Ibid., pp.904-905, 26 March 1969), and Freeth (Ibid., pp.914-915.)).

5 Ibid., Senate, S.33, 5 April 1967, p.572.

and called for an Australian understanding of, and adjustment to, Asian nationalism and economic advancement. However, more importantly, he saw Australia's inability to accept that 'the revolution of expectations' within countries in the region was eroding any efforts to secure and sustain relationships with any one of them.[1] In the Senate, Senator Willesee amplified this, sustaining the view that it was imperative that Australia particularly nurture relations with Indonesia.[2]

G.M. Bryant[3] pursued these themes as well, but advocated that the government 'cast off the shackles of its doctrinaire approach to government and enterprise',[4] and develop the potential economic opportunities between the two countries. While Bryant predicated his observations on the basis of geo-strategic considerations, Rex Connor argued for the advantages that trade between the two countries would provide, particularly in primary products, including petroleum -- breaking Australia's dependence on the American dominated Persian Gulf -- food (wheat, meat and dairy products), rubber and timber. Further, reflecting a strong measure of self-interest, he asked of the government:

> Is it not to our advantage to secure a stable economy there and to secure a stable government without worrying too much about questions of ideology... If we are to achieve anything today as a trading nation we must consider what we can do with Indonesia. This government is prepared to ignore it and to bypass it because bigger dogs have their paws on the bone. We have been warned off so far as Indonesia is concerned. It is their legitimate prey, not ours.[5]

Bryant's views were particularly important in the context of this evolving debate in the House of Representatives because only a few

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1 Ibid., H.R., Vol.53, p.1572, 11 October 1966.

2 Ibid., Senate, S.32., 14 September 1966, p.364. Senator Willesse devoted a great deal of time to Indonesia in this major speech on international affairs. Willesee maintained his views in a second major speech to the Senate a year later. Ibid., 20 September 1967, pp.767-768.

3 The Labor Member for Wills, Victoria (CPD, H.R., Vol.56., pp.186-189, 17 August 1967).

4 Ibid., p.188.

5 The Labor Member for Cunningham, N.S.W. (CPD, H.R., Vol.56, pp.946-947, 7 September 1967).

weeks earlier, he had been a member of a parliamentary delegation to Southeast Asia, led by the Minister for the Navy (and Minister in Charge of Tourist Activities), D. L. Chipp.[1] Although one of its primary aims was to ascertain Australia's image in the countries visited, its success could be measured by its ability to acquire a first-hand view of developments in Indonesia, particularly in the administrative/economic and foreign relations spheres. With reference to the former sphere, the delegation was 'impressed by the identity of purpose at most levels which the Suharto administration has obviously tapped in its determination to restore Indonesia's administrative and economic capability'.[2] In regard to foreign policy the delegation had discussions with Foreign Minister Malik in which he argued for 'positive neutrality': a desire to see the affairs of Southeast Asia handled by Southeast Asians. It was argued by the delegation that such a notion would underwrite any future Indonesian undertakings to secure 'a mutually beneficial and non-aligned relationship with other Asian states'. While Indonesia regarded an Australian involvement in such an association as premature at this time, 'Australia was expected to play a greater role in the region through the development of its bilateral relations'.[3]

It seems that the broader message that Indonesia wanted to get across managed to filter back to Australia,[4] not only to the Opposition, but also to the External Affairs Minister, who suggested in mid-August 1967[5] that it would be 'premature and quite unrealistic' to think of Indonesia in terms of an alliance. The difficulty, however, lay in convincing the Indonesians that any new

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1 The delegation comprised Chipp, Messrs. F.E. Stewart (ALP), E.M. Fox (Liberal), J. Corbett (CP), G.M. Bryant (ALP) and Senators M.F. Scott (Liberal), F. Dittmer (ALP). They visited Singapore, the Philippines and Indonesia.

2 Official Report of Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Southeast Asia, 2-20 July 1967. The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia (No.162), Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra, 1968, p.15.

3 Ibid., p.23.

4 The Report was not tabled until 2 November 1967 (CPD, H.R., Vol.57, p.263, 2 November 1967).

5 CPD, H.R., Vol.56, p.209, 17 August 1967.

security arrangements to which Australia could become a party, should be understood by them as serving objectives which were also in the interests of Indonesia, even though Indonesia was not to be a party to them.

At this time, regionalism -- the role of Australia in Asia -- re-emerged as an important foundation in Australia's policies towards Southeast Asia. Hasluck, as did Barwick before him in the early 1960s, pursued the notion that geographically, Australia was part of Asia and it was of great consequence that any policy should accommodate the means to establish and nurture an understanding between ourselves and the developing Asian nations. Indeed, in 1964, External Affairs Minister Barwick had told the 30th Summer School of the Australian Institute of Political Science that:

> Australia must heavily depend on its diplomacy for the implementation of its foreign policies ... Because of our situation as a European people residing in close contact with South and South East Asia ... our diplomacy is called upon to ensure our own comprehension of our neighbours, [and] to explain ourselves to them ... [However] it remains a continuing task in which we need sensitive and skilful diplomacy.[1]

While the Hasluckian stress on regionalism continued to reinforce a preoccupation with Asia as a central focus of attention for policy makers, the emphasis on strategic concerns -- once a way of pressing the two major Western powers to maintain their regional presence for the purposes of 'containment' and stability -- was giving way to an acknowledgement of the dual notions of economics and security, with a shift in attention toward a potential role for Indonesia.

Whitlam supported Hasluck's general position but sought to carry the argument further. First, he pursued the notion that Australia could, and should, no longer rely on the great powers which lay outside the region; rather, security rested on Australia seeking regional accommodation. For this reason, he elevated relationships with Indonesia, Japan and India above temporary alignment with the United States in Vietnam or with Britain in Malaysia and Singapore. Moreover, Australia's defence and trade roles in Asia had to be broadened and complemented by a political

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[1] Barwick, G., "Australia's Foreign Relations", in Wilkes, J., (ed.), Australia's Defence and Foreign Policy, AIPS, Melbourne, 1964, p.8.

one, in our own right.

Second, until such time as arrangements of this nature were secured, Australia could not forego existing alliances, remaining mindful that adjustments and accommodations of the interests and needs of other regional countries which hold 'deep suspicion of policies which are engineered from outside the region' would have to be made. Underpinning Whitlam's concept of regionalism was the need for 'Asian solutions for Asian problems'.[1] However, before Australia could think in these terms it would be necessary to lower its 'ideological temperature' because 'the passion of countries in this region is not ideology but nationalism and economic advance'.[2]

As far as Whitlam was concerned and revealing perceptions that were to underpin his foreign policy as Labor's first Foreign Minister since Evatt:

> Rather than complain about Britain's desire to plan and make known her plans [about withdrawal], the government should welcome the opportunity and accept the responsibility to cast its own plans to accord with the circumstances in which we are now placed and to accord with the needs of this country and the region in which we are placed for all time.[3]

Clearly, while there was agreement between the two parties on the notion of regionalism, there were different emphases. The government, however, was tentative, particularly in relation to Indonesia. The next period, following the election of Suharto, saw these emphases converge.

A Changing Regionalism

The opening session of Parliament in 1968 roughly coincided with the election of Suharto to the Presidency in March (Australia also had a new Prime Minister in John Gray Gorton). During this autumn sitting of Parliament the Indonesian debate was sporadic, yet continued within the framework of regionalism and, in particular, economic development. The Governor-General's Speech of 12 March gave early momentum to this theme when it was confirmed

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.56, p.219, 17 August 1967.

2 Ibid., p.220.

3 CPD, p.218-219, 17 August 1967. Senator Willesse pursued these themes in his two major statements on international affairs (Ibid., Senate, S.32, 14 September 1966, pp.360-366, and Ibid., 20 September 1967, pp.764-769).

that Australia's aid to Indonesia in the next financial year (1968/69) would be doubled.[1]

Frank Crean[2] praised the government for this initiative and, fresh from a recent trip to Indonesia, indicated to the House of Representatives his impressions of increasing political stability in that country. However, he warned it was a stability that could only be sustained if economic development took place. Crean advocated a more substantial role for Australia in this process by suggesting that, due to the reduction in our defence activities in relation to Indonesia, the resources (money) saved could be devoted to economic assistance for that country. For Crean, in Australia's 'past there has been an attempt to concentrate on defence as the sole means of protecting ourselves or building stable relations in this part of the world'; the focus now should shift to the economic dimension, with aid being 'given with something like the same dedication and precision as apply when military operations are undertaken'. Such a process however could only be successful if Australia developed better mechanisms for the distribution and administration of aid.[3]

This emphasis in the Governor-General's speech on aid to Indonesia drew a favourable response from other Labor members in addition to government members.[4] Yet, what was surprising was the tenor of the latter's remarks. While Dr W.T. Gibbs[5] viewed it as tangible evidence of Australia's willingness to assist Indonesia in

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.58, p.8, 12 March 1968.

2 The Labor Member for Melbourne Ports, Victoria. Ibid., p.45, 13 March 1968.

3 Ibid. Crean also wrote a letter to the Editor of the Age (12.7.68) expressing the same sentiments. Referred to in the House by H.J. McIvor, ALP Member for Gelibrand (Victoria). CPD, H.R., Vol.58, p.114, 14 March 1968.

4 See, for example, McIvor's response, CPD, HR., Vol.58, p.114, 14 March 1968. The small level of aid, however, did draw criticism from Senators Dittmer (ALP, Qld) and Poke (ALP, Tasmania), Ibid., Senate, S.37, 28 March 1968, p.415 and 430.

5 The Liberal Member for Bowman, Qld. CPD, H.R., Vol.58, p.69, 13 March 1968.

her struggle towards recovery, M.W. Lee[1] was more concerned that the aid distributed to Indonesia be put to useful purposes. In what amounted essentially to the earliest expressed concerns in the Parliament over who actually benefited from Australia's economic assistance to Indonesia, Lee affirmed that efforts since the coup to correct the economic situation had met with only limited success and cited recent demonstrations in Jakarta and Bandung over basic commodity prices, as support for his argument. For him, one of the major problems that had to be overcome was corruption. As if setting the stage for later criticisms of the nature of economic development in Indonesia he continued:

> Unfortunately the enormous aid programme has not benefited Indonesia as a whole, but it has undoubtedly made a certain group of people rich beyond measure. Some of the people responsible for economic crimes had been arrested, but many of their counterparts are still at large today... Many people are not unaware that under General Suharto corruption is still prevalent and that people involved in corruption far outnumber the clean ones.[2]

On 26 March, Hasluck steered the debate away from such criticism back to his earlier theme of regional security, and the potential for Australia and Indonesia to consolidate new roles. Regional security for him, and indeed for Labor's Senator Willesee[3], continued to be attainable, if not through defence pacts, then through 'a variety of arrangements, some multilateral, some bilateral, some specific and some less clearly defined, all of which will contribute to regional security'.[4] Of particular interest to Hasluck was the fact that Indonesia had already begun to contribute to that process 'in practical ways' and had also indicated that military cooperation with neighbouring countries could develop. Finally, he was adamant that economic and social

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1 The Liberal Member for Lalor, Victoria. Ibid., p.393, 21 March 1968.

2 Ibid. Lee's assertions drew no comment or reaction in the Parliament or press.

3 CPD, Senate, S.37, 30 April 1968, p.648.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.58, p.453, 26 March 1968. In fact, he was to reinforce this view throughout 1968, together with a slow movement toward an acceptance of Indonesia's determination to maintain a 'free and active foreign policy', free from military pacts.

advancement depended on political stability, as it did on security from the disruptive effects of subversion, insurrection and infiltration.[1]

On the other side of the House of Representatives, Crean[2] -- one of the few politicians in the Parliament to attempt to articulate the developmental issues that could face Indonesia -- pursued a deeper prescriptive analysis of what lay ahead for the country in terms of economic and social development. Within the framework of Black's[3] work on international relations between developed and developing countries, he fleshed out the problems that confronted Indonesia. First, as a result of the Sukarno era, Indonesia's capacity to absorb economic assistance was limited. Second, particular areas needed to be targeted and developed, especially its vast natural resources base and infrastructure, including transport, education and agriculture. Third, and most importantly for Crean, there was a need for Indonesians who possessed the necessary skills, to identify their own country's needs and how they could be successfully met by aid-giving countries like Australia. Crean, however, revealed a wider perspective when he concluded that:

> If we are successful in the next few years in keeping Indonesia politically viable -- and we will be able to do this only if we assist it to develop economically -- Indonesia may become as great a nation in that part of the world as Japan is in its area.

It appears that while Hasluck's views on Indonesia in the context of future regional stability generated some debate within the Parliament, emphasis tended to be more on Vietnam, China and the role of America in the region.[4] However, this broader debate, and its preoccupation with ideology and security, served to provide an imposing backdrop to the conservative parties' continuing

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid., p.589, 28 March 1968.

3 Black, C.E., The Dynamics of Modernization. Harper & Row, New York, 1966.

4 See, for example in the House of Representatives: E.G. Whitlam, CPD, H.R., Vol.58, p.464, 26 March 1968; Messrs T.E.F. Hughes (Liberal Member for Parkes, N.S.W.), R.M. Hatten (Liberal Member for Oxley), Ibid., pp.585-599, 28 March 1968. In the Senate there was a paucity of debate on international affairs.

stereotype views on Indonesian issues. During the remainder of 1968, the debate in the Parliament on economic assistance to, and economic and political development within, Indonesia was paled by events related to the PKI purges in various parts of Indonesia, political prisoners and early rumblings over the West New Guinea 'Act of Free Choice'. Further, it was to remain of minor import until regenerated by Fraser's Defence Speech of March 1970[1] and McMahon's statements of April and September on Australia's aid.[2]

Indonesian and Australian Security: A New Framework

Aid

McMahon's statements on aid were to straddle a period that not only saw an Australian Parliamentary Delegation[3] include Indonesia in its itinerary but also ushered in a debate that saw economic development discussed with less reference to Indonesia's stability and vulnerability to Communist infiltration, than directly to defence. While McMahon's September policy statement reflected the decision to publicly disassociate Australia's aid from political or economic considerations -- thus increasing the diplomatic value of aid programmes generally[4] -- integral to this new direction in the debate on Indonesian issues was the government's continuing and underlying concern with Australia's self-interest and the lesser reference to the welfare of the Indonesian people. Fundamental to the former, was the evolving desire to enhance Indonesia's status

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1 Ibid., H.R., Vol.66, pp.232 ff, 10 March 1970. This speech was simultaneously read in the Senate by Senator Anderson (Ibid., Senate, S.43, 10 March 1970, p.159 ff)

2 Respectively, Ibid., H.R., Vol.62, pp.743-744, 7 April 1969 and Ibid., Vol.69, pp.980-984, 3 September 1970. See also Ibid., Senate, S.43, 7 April 1970, pp.560-561.

3 The delegation comprised D.L. Chipp (Lib.), Senators Byrne (DLP), Dittman (ALP), Rae (Lib.); Messrs A.F. Bennett (ALP), S.E. Calder (CP), L.K. Johnson (ALP) and R.H. Whitlam (Lib.).

4 The idea to emphasize the political impact of Australia's development assistance in this way came from K.C.O. Shann. Harris, personal interview with Shann, Canberra, November 1980.

as a regional power, through aid and trade.[1]

Fraser's Defence Speech pointed to the government's desire to plot a defence posture underlined by a greater degree of self-reliance. Central here was an acknowledgement of the diminishing British and American roles in the region and, because of this, an attempt to redefine Australia's own. Communism remained the focal point, but took on a socio-political character. Accordingly, military involvement was shaded by a new emphasis on economic and diplomatic tools. Such an approach would assist the national and regional development which was considered conducive to the social, economic and political stability basic to Australia's national security interests. This thesis was fortified by the findings of the Parliamentary Delegation which went to Indonesia in mid-1970. Although their findings were not tabled until April 1971, the important point to note was that members of that delegation returned to stimulate the debate on Indonesian issues.

It is in this new framework that McMahon's speeches should be viewed. It showed that as of 1970, a quarter of Australia's external aid, excluding that directed to Papua New Guinea, was being directed to Indonesia. McMahon's aid package to Indonesia included the first public commitment to a triennial programme of funding (1970-73), thereby allowing Indonesia's still precarious economy to anticipate assistance considerably more in advance than had previously been the case. As before, the aid was non-repayable, and incorporated the 'bonus export' approach of conserving scarce Indonesian foreign exchange.[2]

This deliberate guiding of Australian diplomacy towards the betterment of Indonesia's status as a regional force, and its bearing on Australia's future defence and security interests, drew some predictable responses. On the government side of the House of Representatives, backbenchers praised Fraser's stand to maintain Australia's Forward Defence posture, pointing to the near success

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1 A new aspect of Australia's development assistance policy was McMahon's indication that the government was looking 'at proposals for coordinating official aid with investment by Australian private enterprise', although this was put entirely in terms of benefits for less-developed countries. CPD, H.R., Vol.69, p.984.

2 Ibid., Vol.66, p.744, 7 April 1970.

of the Communists in Indonesia.[1] As Irwin argued, 'We never wait until a bushfire reaches the homestead paddock before we try to put it out; we always go out and fight the fire in the back paddocks'.[2]

However, there were some who were reviewing their long held arguments and coming around to this notion of security through development -- a powerful theme in Fraser's Defence Statement. This transformation was particularly marked in the case of the outspoken conservative politician, Calder, in a speech to the House of Representatives in April 1970. While Communism still concerned him, Calder's views were couched less in military than in developmental terms:

> a constructive and positive approach to the problems of Asia ...should ensure that Australia will become a trusted leader in the future developments that take place in the region. Australia must be active to ensure stability and security in Southeast Asia. We could never enjoy any real security or even a sense of security if we turned a blind eye to the problems of Southeast Asia... help[ing] the Southeast Asian countries and to ensure a sound basis for their economic and political stability.[3]

Meanwhile, Whitlam continued his criticism of the government's aid policy into the new decade, finding the three-year pledge 'commendable', yet considering it a subterfuge in the sense that the rate, in real terms, was decreasing.[4] The Opposition leader also chided the government's defence that such aid was in grant form, and pointed to Australia's position relative to less rich countries which, nevertheless, gave larger grants (for example, The Netherlands). He also directed criticism at the 'tied' nature of

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1 L.H. Irwin (Liberal Member for Mitchell, NSW), for instance, considered the PKI 'failed only by 4 to 5 hours [in Indonesia]... the timetable was [then set] for Mainland China to attack India on 23 March of the following year'. Ibid., p.322, 11 March 1970.

2 Ibid.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.66, p.1255, 16 April 1970. See also Ibid., p.425, 12 March 1970, where similar ideas were expressed.

4 Ibid., p.744, 7 April 1970.

Australia's aid,[1] and concluded by calling for a review of Australia's Indonesia aid policy adding, rather bluntly, 'whatever the amount may be -- it will not make a great difference to Indonesia's economy'.[2]

Whitlam was again, in September, provided with an opportunity to restate his views when the Foreign Minister, McMahon, delivered a major statement to the House of Representatives on Australia's external aid.[3] While acknowledging McMahon's continued interest in 'this tremendously important aspect of Australia's relations with her neighbours', he directed the attention of the House of Representatives to his firming view that Australia's contribution continued to be modest; in fact it 'only managed to restore the yearly rate of increase of our total spending to the level at which it stood before the present Prime Minister (Gorton) came to office.'[4] Whitlam was particularly critical of Gorton who, he argued, had put pressure on McMahon to cut overseas aid spending. He emphasized this by drawing statistical comparisons with Australia's past performances in aid contribution, and in relation to other countries. For Whitlam this contribution:

> cannot be merely charity. It cannot be considered merely as a humanitarian enterprise. This should bulk in our consideration; but nonetheless, self-interest itself demands that we regard our aid to our neighbours as a top priority.[5]

Whitlam argued that in the short-term, economic development in the countries of Southeast Asia was vital to Australia's own security interests and that, in the long term, it would serve Australia's commercial self-interest. In relation to Indonesia, in the final analysis, Whitlam found that if Australia was now not prepared to assist that country economically, it may be put into the position of having to contribute substantially more towards future defence.

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1 The bonus export component of Australia's aid was directly tied to Australian purchases and therefore provided benefits to Australian industry and exporters. Similarly, food aid provided direct benefits to the Australian primary producer.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.66, p.745, 7 April 1970.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.69, pp.980-984, 3 September 1970.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.69, p.985, 3 September 1970.

5 CPD, H.R., Vol.69, p.986, 3 September 1970.

As it was, 'our military expenditure in Southeast Asia is much higher than what we are prepared to contribute to the region's economic development'. In the Senate, C.B. Byrne, who had only recently returned from Southeast Asia, considered this expenditure was justified, because:

> when one discusses the Australian presence with people of significance in those areas, one inevitably hears that they find it necessary, desirable and welcome. They see the containment of Communism on the Indo-Chinese Peninsula as something that will save the rest of Southeast Asia.[1]

The budget session of Parliament that year, however, provided Whitlam with further opportunity to criticize the government over a seeming lack of interest in Indonesia. He stated that he was unable to find any historical precedent for such disinterest and took pleasure in reminding the House of Representatives that:

> the only important decisions ever made by this government in terms of our relations with Indonesia have been two disastrous ones of a solely military nature - the introduction of conscription and the purchase of the F111.[2]

W. Morrison[3] pursued Whitlam's argument of Australia's limited and reactionary interest in Indonesia, broadening it by suggesting to Hasluck that Australian diplomatic representation in Indonesia could be strengthened with regional offices in Indonesia, Portuguese Timor and West Irian. However, on the question of Australia's foreign aid programme, he was less generous than Whitlam in his comments on the government, criticizing McMahon's recent aid statement as being underpinned by a 'half-baked and pathetically superficial aid philosophy'. Moreover, he suggested that McMahon had simply pontificated on the moral and humanitarian motives of aid-giving and argued, 'if it had not been for the cold war and the aid sanction between the East and the West our moral and humanitarian instincts might not have been so much in

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1 Ibid., Senate, S.45, 17 September 1970, p.677. C.B. Byrne was a member of the Democratic Labor Party.

2 Ibid., H.R., Vol.69, pp.1145-1146, 15 September 1970.

3 The Labor Member for St. George (NSW), and later Minister for External Territories and Minister for Defence in the Whitlam government.

evidence'.[1]

. Trade

Meanwhile, the issue of trade had been raised earlier in May by A.J. Grassby[2], the first MP to raise it in any substantial way. Grassby centred his early speeches on one major theme -- the Export Payments Insurance Corporation and its activities in relation to Indonesia. He argued that although there was a continuing interest within Australia with regard to Indonesia and its battle to regain momentum, it was not reflected in tangible areas like trade, as revealed by the decreasing value of goods covered by the corporation.[3] In effect:

> the amount of trade as a whole -- not only the amount of trade covered by a number or percentage of exports insured by the Corporation, but the total amount originating in Australia -- is not very significant.[4]

Indeed, Australia's export performance in relation to Indonesia placed us seventh compared to other nations. Grassby considered -- notwithstanding the difficulties inherent in dealing with Indonesia, confrontation and the recent political turmoil -- there was a need to criticize the clear lack of Australian enterprise in the trading arena, compared to that of other nations. He was particularly disturbed by the winding down of the corporation's activities. Essentially, Australia's:

> record calls for an examination and a review because it is in our interests, not only our commercial and trading interests, as a good neighbour seeking the stability of Southeast Asia, to develop in every way our links with the Republic of Indonesia, our nearest neighbour.[5]

For Grassby it was vital that first, trading relations between Australia and Indonesia be subjected to examination by the Minister for Trade and Industry (McEwen); second, that this embrace an analysis of the lack of enterprise in Australia in this regard;

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.69, p.1150, 15 September 1970.

2 The Labor Member for Riverina (NSW) and later Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam Government.

3 Between 1960-61 and 1963-64, total Australian exports to Indonesia fell from 36.3 percent to 0.1 percent.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.67, p.1962, 12 May 1970.

5 CPD, H.R., Vol.67, p.1963, 12 May 1970

and, third, that the corporation's activities be stimulated 'to promote greater, stronger and more enduring links with our nearest neighbour'.[1]

Grassby continued this criticism over the ensuing months, maintaining pressure in the Parliament[2] on the government through interjection[3] and questions[4], culminating in his call in May 1972 for the government's commitments to an Asian Pacific Economic Community.[5] In an observation in August of that year, however, and his last on this matter as an Opposition Member, Grassby reflected on his 'campaign' and conceded that Australia was 'losing the race for trade in New Guinea, and certainly is losing it in Indonesia, our nearest and most important neighbour'.[6]

Such criticism of the government in the area of economic assistance and trade drew little response from the Cabinet, but did not go unheeded by government backbenchers. Grassby's initial broadside in May 1970 drew a stern rebuff from I.L. Robinson[7] who outlined the difficulties which Australian exporters faced in trade with Indonesia. These related in particular to financial arrangements and to the availability,from Australia's manufacturing resources, of the type of goods demanded by the market in Indonesia. Such a situation, according to Robinson, was exacerbated by competitive trade arrangements between Indonesia and other countries, including Japan and West Germany.[8]

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.67, p.1964, 12 May 1970.

2 The issue was raised only on a few occasions in the Senate. See, for example, statements by Senators Mulvihill and O'Byrne, respectively; Ibid., Senate S.45 26 August 1970, p.284 and Ibid., 21 April 1971, p.940.

3 See for example, Ibid., H.R., Vol.69, p.884, 2 September 1970.

4 See, for example, questions to McMahon (Minister for External Affairs), on aid to Indonesia; Ibid., Vol.70, p.2304, 15 October 1970, and Ibid., Vol.71, p.676, 25 February 1971.

5 Ibid., Vol.78, p.2269, 9 May 1972.

6 Ibid., Vol.79, p.797, 29 August 1972.

7 The Country Party Member for Cowper (NSW).

8 CPD, H.R., Vol.67, pp.1968-1969, 12 May 1970.

Nevertheless, In September, D.E. Fairbairn[1] was quick to defend the government's policies against the criticisms mounted by Whitlam and Morrison. However, he attempted to shift the focus away from Australia's poor trade links with Indonesia when he reminded the House of Representatives, as had Sir Magnus Cormack in the Senate some months earlier,[2] of Australia's diplomatic efforts in relation to Indonesia in other areas: in representation, particularly during confrontation, and in economic assistance -- which was in grant forms and pledged three years in advance.[3]

However, while such themes were inherent in the Parliamentary Delegation's report, which was tabled in April 1971,[4] they were not defended again by any government backbencher until late 1971, when S.E. Calder[5] pursued a similar line to Fairbairn, although he did urge the government to grant more aid (both military and economic) and stimulate trade (particularly in oil, which had decreased substantially as an import from Indonesia after Australia began its own oil production programme).[6] But a defence of Australia's economic assistance programme to Indonesia was not made again until October 1972 when L.S. Reid,[7] although rather critical of the

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1 The Liberal Member for Farrer (NSW), and Minister for National Development.

2 CPD, Senate, S.43, 22 April 1970, p.1023. Cormack was concerned, however, that Australia's contribution to Indonesia's economic rehabilitation was akin 'to pouring water onto an ash heap in that the more water one pours onto it the more water the ash seems to absorb'.

3 Ibid., H.R., Vol.69, p.1215, 16 September 1970. See also the defence mounted by N.A. Brown (Liberal Member for Diamond Valley), particularly of Australia's aid as a percentage of GNP (Ibid., pp.1147-1148). See also the defence put up by Tasmanian Liberal Senator, P.E. Rae, Ibid., Senate, S.45, 26 August 1970, p.284.

4 Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, 25 June - 16 July 1970, Parliamentary Paper No.39, AGPS, Canberra, 1971.

5 Country Party Member for Northern Territory.

6 CPD, Vol.75, p.3331, 11 November 1971. Calder went as far as to question Prime Minister McMahon as to whether the Australian Government was going to enter into a defence arrangement with Indonesia, Ibid., p.3981, 2 December 1971.

7 The Liberal Member for Holt, Victoria.

limited amount of aid given in our overall aid programme, commended the government's humanitarian rationale for the giving of aid, and called on it to embrace the voluntary agencies as vehicles for its distribution.[1]

Meanwhile, the wider Indonesia debate in the Parliament had straddled the Suharto visit of February 1972, with increasing emphasis being placed on Indonesia's stability and the importance that Indonesia held in terms of Australian security.[2] It should be noted that never far below the surface of opinions expressed by Members of both parties at this time was a concern for Indonesia's long-term stability, and the implications for Australian security if this stability was to falter. Reference to this element of our external environment was sometimes implicit, other times explicit. As D.J. Hamer[3] argued in the Parliament on the eve of Suharto's visit to Australia:

> While Indonesia is in strong and free hands we are not vulnerable to invasion. Therefore, the maintenance of Indonesia's strength and independence must be a high priority of our economic aid, and our foreign and defence policies.[4]

The Communist Threat

Fundamental to Hamer's views was the long-held fear of communist invasion; a theme that had underwritten much of the debate in the House of Representatives[5] on Indonesian issues since 1966. Earliest references to it embraced two essential elements -- the threat of communism to regional stability and the resistance of anti-communist forces in Indonesia.

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.81, p.2321, 10 October 1972. Although this approach was repeated by J.D.M. Dobie (Liberal Member for Coole) and S.E. Calder, it drew sharp criticism from Dr R.E. Klugman (ALP Member for Prospect, NSW). Ibid., pp.2321-2322.

2 See in particular Hamer's speech in the parliamentary debate on Australia's Defence, Vol.77, pp.1449-1450, 11 April 1972; and M.J.R. Mackeller (Liberal Member for Warringah, NSW), Ibid., Vol.78, p.2887, 23 May 1972.

3 The Liberal Member for Isaacs, Victoria.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.75, p.3516, 23 November 1971.

5 In the Senate, few references were made to Communism, in the context of Indonesia, between 1966 and 1974.

In terms of the former, the earliest comment in March of that year was made by Sir Keith Wilson when he warned the Australian Parliament of the consequences to Australia had the attempted coup in Indonesia on 30 September succeeded.[1] This was followed almost immediately by McEwen's insensitively worded speech in which he noted the 'wave of relief' throughout Australia at developments in Indonesia. Although this statement invoked acrimonious exchanges between both sides of the House of Representatives[2], and drew comments from the Australian press, it set a pattern for subsequent statements, in varying intensity, from the Government and the Opposition. W.C. Harworth[3] spoke of 'Chinese' Communism while J. Bate[4] referred to 'expansionary' Communism, but both saw Indonesia's resistance as providing the test at a time of 'very great danger'[5] in Southeast Asia as a whole.

This theme was to dominate the conservative parties' statements on Indonesia over subsequent years, most prominent being from Sir John Cramer[6] who put it to the House of Representatives in 1969:

> Although Indonesia now has defeated Communism, the number of Communists who infiltrated into that country presented a very dickie [sic] problem for a long time. The Indonesian government now has control. What would be the position if other countries came under Communist domination? How much longer could Indonesia hold her place? I remind honourable members that she is right on our doorstep.

Such arguments had been pursued by McEwen during less stable times in Indonesia in 1967 when he said that, had Communism succeeded:

> we would have been living for the last 20 years under the shadow of a nation of 100 million people - our nextdoor neighbours - subjected to the influence and direction of

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.50, p.303, 16 March 1966.

2 See Dr J.F. Cairns (Labor Member for Yarra, Victoria), Ibid., pp.451-452. H.B. Turner (Liberal Member for Bradfield), Ibid., Vol.51, pp.1740-1741, 11 and 12 May 1966.

3 Liberal Member for Isaacs, Victoria. Ibid., Vol.52, pp.685-686, 1 September 1966.

4 Liberal Member for Macarthur, NSW. Ibid., pp.740-741.

5 Ibid., p.685 and p.740.

6 The Liberal Member for Bennelong, NSW. Ibid., Vol.62, p.782, 20 March 1969.

China, the greatest aggressive Communist power today.[1]

Cramer was joined by L.H. Irwin[2] and Calder, the latter considering Australia as once being in the 'firing line'[3] of an Indonesia that, up until 1965, 'was almost the jewel in the communist crown'. However, it was now 'slowly coming around the corner to economic and social stability under a strong anti-communist government'.[4] Calder also stated that, while he was a member of the Parliamentary Delegation that visited Indonesia in mid-1970, he had 'heard almost every day from Indonesia's leaders, warnings about the downward thrust of Communism'.[5]

Calder's preoccupation with Communism and desire for economic and social stability was a theme that was deeply submerged in many of the statements made by government Members. Labor's K.E. Beazley[6] -- perhaps the most perceptive and capable of Labor's rising leaders, and one who had also a strong interest in economic and humanitarian questions -- attempted to loosen this link to Communism. In 1967, in tandem with Hasluck -- now tending towards an emphasis on the need for economic assistance rather than an embracement of this rather fervent anti-communist line -- he argued that 'Starvation is more destructive than armies ... the fundamental political issue in the world today will be proved to be not communism or anti-communism but starvation'. It was not until the early 1970's that we heard government Members move beyond this single-minded fervor and begin to talk about a positive economic, rather than a military, role in the search for stability.

The second element of this debate on Communism - resistance to

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.57, p.2691, 2 November 1967. See also the similar view held by W.T. Arthur, Liberal Member for Barton, NSW, Ibid., Vol.54, p.346, 2 March 1967.

2 The Liberal Member for Mitchell, NSW, Ibid., Vol.66, p.322, 11 March 1970.

3 Ibid, p. 425, 12 March 1970. See also Ibid, p. 1255, 16 April 1970.

4 Ibid., Vol.69, p.884, 2 September 1970.

5 Ibid., p.1344, 17 September 1970.

6 Labor Member for Fremantle, WA. Ibid., Vol.56, p.765, 5 September 1967.

anti-communist forces -- was first raised by A.A. Armstrong[1] early in 1966. In his view:

> had South Vietnam fallen, as it would have done if the United States had not used its strength to prevent this happening, there would have been a leap-frog movement to Indonesia, because great impetus would have been given to the Communist forces in Indonesia and the anti-Communist forces would have experienced a reduction of practical and moral backing.

Over the ensuing months this interpretation was to gain currency among government Members. In May, as we noted earlier, Defence Minister Fairhall embraced the notion, giving it a more liberal interpretation when he said resistance by America and its allies in Vietnam was fortifying the resistance of the non-communist countries of the Asian mainland.[2]

P.E. Lucock[3] focused directly on anti-Indonesian elements when he put it another way:

> One of the contributing factors to the setback that China suffered in Indonesia was our action in Vietnam [which] gave the Indonesians courage, faith and the belief that there were people who believed in them.

This line of argument strengthened over the years, in the face of Opposition criticism. Particularly scathing was T. Uren[4] who, in response to Armstrong's earlier blanket criticism of worldwide Communism, pointed to contradictions inherent in the government's arguments by drawing attention to the American-backed (economic assistance) Communist governments in Yugoslavia, Rumania and Poland. G.M. Bryant[5], recently returned from the Parliamentary Delegation visit to Indonesia, told the House of Representatives, in response to Lucock's views:

> I am surprised to hear anybody claim that Australia's commitment in Vietnam steeled the resolution of the Indonesians to deal with their own problems. When some

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1 The CP Member for Riverina, NSW. Ibid., Vol.50, p.708, 29 March 1966.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.51, p.1642, 10 May 1966.

3 The CP Member for Lyne, NSW. Ibid., Vol.56, pp.380-381, 23 August 1967.

4 The Labor Member for Reid, NSW. Ibid., Vol.50, p.709, 29 March 1966.

5 The Labor Member for Wills, Victoria. Ibid., Vol.56, p.382, 23 August 1967.

> of us asked the Indonesians about this matter ... they regarded our questions as insulting ... The Indonesians have had four lots of internal trouble - two right-wing revolutions and two left-wing revolutions - and they have managed to control all of them. Their attitude to Vietnam is: If we were able to control our own affairs in this way, why are not the South Vietnamese?

Notwithstanding this criticism, government Members persisted with this view into the early 1970s. Armstrong,[1] and Bate[2] were particularly vocal at the time of the resurgence of Communist activities in Central and East Java in early to mid-1968. It reached a stage where Beazley, in response to this heightening acrimony, told the Parliament, 'All this government wants to talk about is Communism...'.[3]

It was not until the latter part of 1970 that a convergence of the Armstrong thesis and the role of economic development -- as a tool for stability -- seemed to occur in statements made by government Members. In September 1970, R.V. Garland[4] argued that, 'the resistance of the Indonesian generals to the 1965 Communist coup was stiffened greatly by the presence of the United States and other forces in South Vietnam', and called for continued Australian economic assistance. One backbencher suggested closer military cooperation with Indonesia.[5]

Such emphasis on economic development and its relationship to Indonesian stability was also evident in Labor's interpretations of events in Indonesia during this same period. Apart from those leading to criticisms of the government, like those of Whitlam (as already quoted), there were some constructive views. The earliest

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1 Ibid., Vol.58, p.612, 28 March 1968. Bryant, again was critical of Armstrong. Ibid., p.614.

2 Ibid., Vol.59, p.1157, 7 May 1968.

3 Ibid., p.2181, 22 May 1969. See also similar comments expressed by Senator J.L. Cavanagh, Ibid., Senate, S.32, 25 August 1966, p.129.

4 The Liberal Member for Curtain, WA. Ibid., Vol.69, p.960, 3 September 1970.

5 J.E. McLeay, the Liberal Member for Boothby, SA. Ibid., p.1237, 16 September 1970.

such example was that expressed by E.W. Harding[1] who argued that:

> Communism in Asia can be defeated in the long run only by the Asians themselves, suppressing it by force of arms and doing nothing to remove its causes, as we have seen in so many other parts of the world, will only make its supremacy a certainty... I hope that the Indonesian government ... will begin to put economics before politics ... Australia as a nation can help Indonesia in this respect.

While Whitlam only once spoke of an Indonesia 'that has barely escaped, after terrible turmoil and convulsion, from the threat of Communist domination',[2] he was to take a prominent part in debates on an Indonesian revival, although, without the stress on Communism that was evident in the views of his parliamentary contemporaries.[3] He believed that while the government under Suharto was a more stable arrangement than was the government under Sukarno the stability offered by Suharto could only be maintained if economic development took place. Thus, he felt we had historical and practical reasons to render assistance to Indonesia.

However, not all Labor members shared Whitlam's confidence in Indonesia's stability, particularly in the long term. In a lively debate on Australia's defence in March 1969, G.G.D. Scholes[4] pursued a similar line to that taken by his leader regarding aid, but was more explicit in his reasons for doing so. Using colourful language to describe threats to Australia from our north,[5] Scholes was critical of the stationing of Australian forces in Malaysia, believing it to be one of the least likely sources of communist

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1 Ibid., Vol.50, p.852, 31 March 1966. In the Senate, Senator Willesee was pursuing a balanced view on Indonesia, and Australia's prospects in assisting her (Ibid., Senate, S.35, 20 September 1967, p.767).

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.54, p.208, 28 February 1967.

3 See for example, H.J. McIvor (Labor Member for Gellibrand, Victoria), who argued that he had 'no quarrel about giving practical help to the less developed countries of the world... Aid of this type provides the best instruments with which to combat the downward thrust of Communism' (Ibid., Vol.58, pp.114-115, 14 March 1968).

4 The Labor Member for Corio, Victoria. Ibid., Vol.62, p.362, 4 March 1969.

5 Scholes was of the view that 'If we [were to] hang a map of Asia on the wall, Asia looks very threatening. If the paint came unstuck it would fall over Australia'.

infiltration in Asia. Such a view however did not extend to Indonesia. Indeed:

> Whilst we may like to think - it is good for our own morale and for our policies to do so because it solves a difficulty - that Indonesia is now safe from any future Communist infiltration or subversion, I would suggest that Indonesia is a far more vulnerable part of Asia than is Malaysia.

The strange hold these continuing perceptions of communist threat had on some sections of Parliament was further revealed, albeit curiously, in an exchange weeks later. In a resumption of the debate on defence later in March, Labor's A.W. James set out to condemn the Indonesian Government for their brutal activities in the purging of communists -- a move which was gaining momentum at that time in parts of Java. James saw it as nothing other than the:

> massacring [of] hundreds or thousands of progressive thinking people ... who want ... to lift the standard of living of those who have been exploited down through the ages ... [Indonesians] call them left-wingers and communists and think that gives them the right to murder.[1]

James levelled his criticism at both sides of the parliamentary floor for not attempting to publicly confirm, and condemn, the 'barbarity of the kind perpetrated in Java by a section of the Indonesian army'. As he provocatively pointed out to the House of Representatives:

> We condemn the Communists if they behave in this way in Vietnam or Malaysia and Singapore ... What would be our government's action if the position were reversed? We would want to send troops to Indonesia to put down the so-called Communist menace....

This drew angry responses from members of the conservative parties, in particular, L.L. Bosman, G.O. Giles and Sir John Cramer. Bosman set his sights on 'the temerity' of James to call the government side of the House of Representatives to order, and focused on James' political sympathies which in his view, reflected 'a unique capacity for sympathy with the very organizations and countries which caused so much havoc in Indonesia and the situation which prevails here today'. Playing down the military's activities he added:

> Communist ... people infiltrated during the difficult

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[1] CPD, H.R., Vol.62, p.754, 20 March 1969.

> years which faced Indonesia and with graft and corruption endeavoured to create anarchy. In turn, they caused a resurgence amongst the people and divided them to such a degree that they have now reacted against one another.[1]

While Cramer reinforced this theme,[2] his Liberal Party colleague, Giles, insisted that he was 'not one of those who looks for a communist under every bush', and pursued an argument very similar to Whitlam's, rather than that by the majority of his own party colleagues and many in the Labor ranks.[3] While there were some in the government ranks, like Armstrong,[4] who were coming around to this line of thinking, particularly following Garland's speech to the House of Representatives in 1970,[5] the prevailing view within the government was that a stable Indonesia was vital to regional stability,[6] although the emphasis on Communism was more implicit.

The New Whitlam Government

Although some debate took place on economic aid to Indonesia in the first few months of the new Whitlam government, it was sporadic and not the subject of full debate until the East Timor crisis had reached its zenith. In May 1973 Whitlam made reference to the role assistance -- both economic and military --played in Australia's relations with Indonesia, however, it was in a debate that revolved around Whitlam's notion of a new regional organization. While this idea had earlier drawn strong criticism from the Opposition,[7] Whitlam continued promoting such a concept, although he later acknowledged, in a major speech to the Parliament on international affairs in May, that it would 'be a slow and delicate growth. We are content at present to let the concept take

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.62, p. 756, 20 March 1969.

2 Ibid., p.782.

3 Ibid., p.764.

4 See Ibid., Vol.64, p.326, 14 August 1969.

5 See J.D. Jess (Liberal Member for La trobe, Victoria). See Hamer's statement to the House of Representatives. Ibid., Vol.75, p.3516, 23 November 1971.

6 Hamer, CPD, H.R., Vol.77, p.1450, 11 April 1972. See also M. McKellar (Liberal Member for Warringah, NSW), Ibid., Vol.78, p.2887, 23 May 1972.

7 Bury. Ibid., H.R., Vol.82, p.93, 28 February 1973.

seed' and stressed that the government was 'completely flexible on the timing, structure and membership of any future arrangements'.[1] Whitlam was content meanwhile, to direct Australian Government efforts towards consolidating and strengthening bilateral relations.

More broadly, Whitlam considered that an important element of Australia's cooperation with our regional neighbours lay in the extension of aid and assistance -- both economic and, at variance with his firmly held views of the past seven years, military. Initially he focused attention on military cooperation with the view that the form it took was vital to the development of Australia's interests; only, however, if it was not directed 'to serve contrary ends by aggravating the very tendencies and developments which it is designed to head off'. With respect to Indonesia, he argued that Australia's defence cooperation was not only in accord with such a philosophy but would serve as a model for defence cooperation arrangements in the future. In this context, regional cooperation would be on an informal basis without the need for formal military pacts, while promoting 'self-reliance' in the recipient country, and its 'capability to resist external threat'.[2]

Notwithstanding this early acknowledgement of the value of military cooperation -- no doubt for domestic consumption -- Whitlam moved quickly to point out the 'more important element in our relations with Indonesia' -- civil aid. While Whitlam stressed Australia's programme with Indonesia -- over double that of our defence aid -- was to serve as a model for our overall civil aid programme, he was, at the time, more concerned with Indonesia's efforts towards generating:

> economic growth, creating wider employment activities, maintaining and accelerating expansion of the agricultural sector, achieving more balanced regional development and greater diversification of the economic structure, and providing improved social welfare,

and Australia's widening role in assisting its regional neighbours reach such goals.[3]

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.84, p.2646, 24 May 1973. See also Introduction, Part Three.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.84, p.2646, 24 May 1973.

3 Ibid., p.2647.

References in Whitlam's speech to Indonesia did not generate any discussion in the Parliament and the issue of aid and trade in relation to Indonesia was not raised again for nearly a year. Instead, Opposition criticisms of the direction and flamboyance of Whitlam's regional policies dominated debate throughout the year.[1] Whitlam on one occasion attempted 'to dispel any misunderstandings' about his government's foreign policy, while also emphasizing to leaders in Southeast Asia the continuing and undiminished importance of the region to Australia.[2] While he layed great stress on trade and economic links with the countries which he had visited earlier in January, his statement met wide-ranging skepticism in the Parliament for its lack of substance.

Snedden, the new Liberal Party leader, stressed the 'special' scope for increasing trade between Australia and Indonesia, and resurrected an idea put to the House of Representatives some four years earlier by Morrison when he suggested that there was value in establishing consulates throughout Indonesia. He also revived the former Liberal-Country Party government's concept of 'special trade preferences', advocating their use as a catalyst to generate trade. Moreover, Snedden indicated that any increased assistance for the economic development of a country like Indonesia needed to include technical -- as opposed to tertiary -- education, together with management training, which was an area he argued Australia had something to offer. Also, there was scope for cooperative efforts in business and development ventures, as evidenced by Indonesia's encouraging provisions for such investment cooperation.[3]

During a debate the following month, the government came under pressure from its own backbench. In a speech on the Australian Development Assistance Agency Bill, J.C. Kerin[4] expressed concern about two areas -- the excessive level of defence aid to Indonesia and the direction and nature of Australia's civil aid program. Whether Indonesia was a military dictatorship or Australia and

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1 This criticism began in February, and was initiated by the former Liberal Foreign Affairs Minister, L.H.E. Bury. CPD, H.R., Vol.82, p.92-93, 28 February 1973.

2 Ibid., Vol.88, pp.202-207, 7 March 1977.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.88, pp.442-443, 14 March 1973.

4 The Labor Member for Macarthur, NSW. Ibid., pp.874-878, 2 April 1974.

Indonesia shared common defence problems, Kerin considered both were irrelevant when considering the view that such a high level of defence aid could 'mean that her neighbouring countries may also feel induced to spend more on equipment'.

Australia's civil aid program was of particular concern to Kerin, who referred to recent criticism by an Australian academic, Dr P.J. Eldridge,[1] and the 'self-interested nature' of Australia's programme aid to Indonesia. Kerin also made reference to Associate Professor Herb Feith[2] who criticized 'the conventional World Bank style or International Monetary Fund style approach to economic development to which Indonesia has become committed'. The work of both Eldridge and Feith lent force to Kerin's belief that, notwithstanding advances in the Indonesian economy, little by way of distributions had flowed to the people, and he queried whether 'the classic economic models of engines of economic growth still hold?'. Moreover, he argued:

> I am sure that definitions of development which take growth as their hub are misleading, that emphasis, particularly in Indonesia, should be on increasing capacity in development of indigenous resources and that political stability need not be the main measuring stick of the levels of assistance we offer.[3]

However, C.J. Hurford[4] reinforced the principles of a policy that had been evident for some years when, in terms of Australia's overall aid to Asia, he argued the case for a 'special effort in support of Indonesia'. This was built on arguments related to its proximity to Australia, her complex development problems and the overarching notion, now a doctrine, that:

> Indonesia's political stability and programme in economic development are matters of vital concern to our country. A severe crisis in the Indonesian economy almost certainly would herald a period of political instability with obvious complications for Australia's security.

Hence, if Indonesia was to overcome her development problems it would serve Australian foreign and security policies, as well as

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1 Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, University of Tasmania.

2 Reader, Monash University.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.88, p.877, 2 April 1974.

4 The Labor Member for Adelaide, SA. Ibid., pp.925-927, 3 April 1974.

Australia's long-term commercial interests.[1]

This was one of the last references to the issue of Indonesia's economic development and its implications for security in the region. However, many of its major precepts were to come under intense scrutiny with the emergence of the East Timor issue on the parliamentary agenda.

Conclusions

The amount of time devoted to discussion of Indonesian issues in the Parliament during the period reviewed was relatively small compared to other foreign and domestic policy matters. However, what debate there was reflected deep-seated ideological and historical prejudices. Throughout the nine-year period, this debate focused in main on economic assistance to, and economic and political developments in, Indonesia.

Fundamental to the style and tone of the debate was the conservative parties' incessant preoccupation with Communism and its implications for Australia's security. A concern was shared by all parliamentary parties about future regional security issues in the wake of British and American decisions to wind down their presence in the region. Integral to these views was a recognition of Indonesia's place in any future regional security arrangements, although there were marked differences as to how its potential security role should be realized.

Future regional security issues aside, early discussion on developments in Indonesia was neither informed nor intense (unlike that in the press at the time). For the first eighteen months, questions from Parliamentarians about the features and political direction of the new administration in Jakarta found few answers in government statements, with government leaders keeping a tight rein on any information or assessments concerning such matters. To a point, this reflected the nature of foreign policy-making in that this requires a greater degree of secrecy and discretion than domestic issues, but it also meant that the government was a victim of conditions over which it had very little control. In such a situation, it was faced with acutely difficult decisions at a time when the Labor opposition possessed no real alternative to the

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[1] CPD, H.R., Vol.88, p.926, 3 April 1974.

tactics and position adopted by the Government.

When the political dust had settled in Indonesia, and the 'New Order' had consolidated its position, a period began in which the parliamentary debate was dominated by the conservative parties' deep-seated anti-communist political beliefs. For these parties, while there were overwhelming international and domestic reasons for this, it set the tone and shape of the debate on Indonesian issues up until the early 1970s.

The government's preoccupation with Australia's security interests was never far from the surface in expressions of concern for Indonesia's poor economic and political situation. Indonesia's vulnerabilities served to galvanize the conservative parties in their broader and ongoing, but flawed, campaign against communist encroachment in the region. At the forefront here were hardened Liberal and Country Party figures such as Arthur, Harworth, Armstrong, Bate, McEwen and Calder. This troubled many Members in the Opposition, as well as a number of government Members, including Hasluck, McMahon and Chipp.

Those at the forefront of Opposition concern were Beazley, Bryant, Keefe and Willesee, and to a degree, Cairns. This group was particularly critical of the explicit self-interest inherent in government views. Beazley in particular, a man of compassion and intellect and who had a deep interest in economic and humanitarian questions, quite correctly took the government to task on many occasions over its motivations in extending politically loaded assistance to Indonesia. Moreover, few opposition Members disagreed with Whitlam's often caustic criticism of the government's hesitation to act in this area, a weakness he was to focus on until he was Prime Minister. The decision, however, to make Indonesia a special point of attack against the government was one of the less understandable elements in Labor's policy.

While Whitlam was particularly critical of the government's preoccupation with military-strategic considerations in shaping its attitudes towards Asia, others in the Labor Party (like some elements of the press) focused on the opportunities lost to Australia through such an attitude, in the economic and trade areas. This widened the debate and shifted the focus away from ideology, something Hasluck had been attempting to achieve for much of the 1967-69 period. In doing so, it gave rise to a more constructive bipartisan debate.

The high level of parliamentary interest in aid issues generally at this time obviously contributed to the mounting level of pressure on the government to address the now central issue of economic assistance to Indonesia. Indeed, Indonesia became the major focal point for a change in Australia's aid policy, affecting the duration for which aid commitments would be made. Importantly, in the context of the changing international situation as perceived by the government, the achievement of Australia's foreign policy objectives depended increasingly, in the long term, on Australia's economic aid programme.

Moreover, the public[1] and parliamentary interest in Indonesian aid and trade issues, as well as the Australia-Indonesia political relationship, may have been one of the factors leading to a number of parliamentary investigations into such matters.[2] These inquiries brought together a cross-section of politicians, while providing active non-government (and government) individuals and interest groups (seeking to be heard on contentious Indonesian issues, such as aid[3] and political prisoners.[4]) with the opportunity

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1 See Chapter Six

2 See Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, Inquiry into Australia's Foreign Aid (1973), Parliamentary Paper No.338; Prospects for Trade between Australia and Indonesia. Report from the Senate Standing Committee on Industry and Trade, AGPS, Canberra 1975. See also Official Hansard Transcript of Evidence, Vol.1 and Vol.2; Australia's Relations with Indonesia, Interim Report, Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Government Printers of Australia, Canberra 1974. (In May 1970, the Joint Committee appointed a sub-committee to consider Australia's relations with Indonesia. An Interim Report of the sub-committee was considered and adopted by the full committee on 17 October 1972. It was tabled in April 1973. The Report's preliminary findings on the subject of relations between Papua New Guinea and West Irian reflected the Committee's belief that they were of 'immediate concern'. The sub-committee comprised Senators R. Bishop, Dame Nancy Buttfield and J.L. Carrick; and S.E. Calder, D.M. Cameron, Hon. Sir John Cramer, Hon. R.C. Katter, F.M. Kirwan, M.J.R. Mackellar, W.L. Morrison and R.J. Reynolds. The evidence upon which the committee based its preliminary findings was not available to the writer.

3 The Liberal Member for Holt (L.S. Reid), for example, maintained direct links with the voluntary aid agencies. As President of one such agency -- For Those Who Have Less -- he was in a position to represent the agencies' views in the Parliament. The work of academics (for

to participate, as well as to establish links with influential Members of Parliament. The impact of those who contributed submissions and oral evidence can be gauged from the coincidence between the views reached by the inquiries, and some of the opinions expressed. The value of such inquiries lay also in the amount of information made available to the public and, with the exception of one inquiry,[1] the ensuing bipartisan report.

There were a number of other features of the parliamentary debate on Indonesian issues, which concerned foreign policy in general and were important in relation to the existing and future role of parliament. First, many parliamentarians had gained first-hand knowledge of Indonesia. G.M. Bryant (Labor), D.L. Chipp (Liberal) and Senators M.F. Scott (Liberal) and F. Dittmer (Labor) had been members of the Parliamentary Delegation to Southeast Asia (including Indonesia) in 1967. In 1970, Chipp and Dittmer were to return, joined by S.E. Calder (Liberal). Moreover, Crean, Whitlam and Beazley (Labor) maintained a close personal interest in Indonesian affairs throughout the period reviewed. Such personal involvement of even a small number of parliamentarians noticeably affected the quality of the debate on Indonesian issues.

Second, political developments in Indonesia as a whole could not be separated from the plight of the Indonesian people. Within the parliament and outside, participants in the debate stressed the need for the Australian Government to act in two areas -- to assist in Indonesia's economic development and to take diplomatic action that would facilitate closer political relations. In the debates in the parliament throughout this period both aspects were explored; economic assistance and foreign policy were inextricably linked.

For the most part, throughout this period, a bipartisan policy on economic assistance to, and development in, Indonesia was

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example Dr. Eldridge and Professor Feith) on Australia's development aid to Indonesia also generated debate in the Parliament.

[4] Professor Feith actively campaigned on the political prisoners issue from the late 1960s into the 1970s, by which time -- in December 1973 -- 25 parliamentarians had signed a petition calling for either the release or trial of political prisoners in Indonesia.

[1] Australia's Relations with Indonesia, Interim Report.

pursued in the Parliament. The government and opposition Parties were in essential agreement over the political, economic and humanitarian considerations underlying these aspects of Australia's Indonesian policy. In the late 1960s, however, when Australia was experiencing a degree of regional insecurity,and the direction of its foreign policy was not clear, differences in rhetorical terms were more acute. By the mid-1970s, when major changes in our international environment were nearly complete, some well-informed and concerned parliamentarians put pressure on the government to take up a number of contentious issues with Indonesia.

Up until this time, however, no major Indonesian issue emerged to any significant degree in the Parliament or among the major political parties.[1] This was, in large part, due to the cross-party consensus which the government's Indonesia policy received, particularly in the pre-Whitlam government period. However, it was also due to the limited understanding (or interest) most

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[1] There was no available evidence that the Liberal Party's extra-parliamentary organization expressed views on Indonesian matters to Liberal MPs. The Federal Council of the Liberal Party met annually but its reports and resolutions were secret. The Country Party rarely focused on issues other than those concerned with their rural interests. While the defence and foreign policy sections of the ALP platform provided the context for policy during the period under review, the ALP -- including the trade unions which occasionally had a view on Indonesian matters -- was more interested in domestic policies. On many of these Indonesian matters, the conference was often endorsing policies put forward by the Parliamentary Labor Party (and thus appeared to have little influence on the latter). Refer to the following: Australian Labor Party, Official Report of the Proceedings of the 26th Commonwealth Conference 1965, published by ALP, 1965, p.74 ff (especially p.80); Australian Labor Party, Official Report of the Proceedings of the 27th and 28th Commonwealth Conferences, 1967 and 1969, Griffin Press, Adelaide, 1967, p.19 ff and Appendix L, esp. p.211 (Item 24 on West Irian and a call for a 'democratic plebiscite'); Australian Labor Party, Platform, Constitution and Rules (29th Commonwealth Conference) 1971, Commercial Printing House, Adelaide, 1971. (Indonesian issues did not figure in any Resolutions adopted by the 1971 Federal Conference). The 1973 Conference adopted a Resolution (No.14) that 'expresses... grave concern at the prolonged detention and torture of political prisoners in South Vietnam...'. No mention, in this regard, was made of Indonesia. The Australian Labor Party, Platform, Constitution and Rules, David Combe, Canberra City, 1973, p.52.

parliamentary Members had of Indonesian issues, or of broader foreign policy issues. Thus, while the Parliament was 'part of the context of argument and of explanation',[1] it did not, like the political parties generally, have any direct influence over the government's formulation of its Indonesia policy in this period. These issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine.

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[1] Miller, T.B., "The Making of Australian Foreign Policy" in B.D. Beddie, (ed.), Advance Australia - Where?, p.158.

CHAPTER SIX

WIDER COMMUNITY OPINION: MAJOR LOBBY GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS (1965 - 1974)

Introduction

This chapter focuses on other sources of Australian domestic opinion in the period extending from the coup until the first raising of the East Timor issue in the Australian Parliament in 1974. Approaches to Indonesian issues as expressed through public opinion polls, non-government lobby groups and individuals, including the academic and business communities, are considered together with an assessment of their impact on public opinion and policy-making by the Australian Government.[1]

The Australian Government's attitudes and policies toward Indonesia at first received little comment in the wider community. What comment there was, existed as part of the broader discussion taking place on Australia's foreign policy in the context of the changing nature of international and regional politics. This debate intensified with the British and American decisions to withdraw from the region while, on another level, attention began to focus on the role that Suharto's Indonesia would play in such circumstances.

This discussion however saw the emergence of dissenting views that focused on the increasingly authoritative nature of the Suharto regime. The West New Guinea issue served to accelerate this discussion, sowing the seeds of a debate that increasingly focused on the level of costs that Australia was prepared to accept in the maintenance of what was, by the early 1970s, a fast developing and increasingly important strategic relationship.

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[1] This includes those people or groups, other than 'public opinion', who made up what Almond calls the 'attentive' public. This group of individuals and organizations are well informed on Indonesian matters, have been interested in them for some time and express opinions on these matters. This group represents only a small percentage of the population, the remainder are either not interested in foreign policy matters, or are apathetic. Almond, G., The American People and Foreign Policy, Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1950, p.6.

For the purposes of analysis, this chapter is divided into three sections: the first briefly examines public opinion; the second and third examine the disparate groups and individuals with views on Indonesian issues. These are divided into two main categories: those groups and individuals whose major interest was centred on Australia's relationship with Indonesia and those groups which, while not specifically organized around an interest in the relationship, were concerned with Indonesian matters. The first category was made up of groups like the Australian-Indonesian Association (AIA) and the Australian Indonesian Business Cooperation Committee (AIBCC), as well as the academic community. The second category was also made up of groups such as the Returned Services League (RSL), Trade Unions, Churches and Aid Groups. While their broader activities were directed more towards other interests, it became evident that this activity increasingly embraced Indonesian matters.

Community Opinion

Before examining the broadly held attitudes of the general community, a number of points need to be made. First, public opinion polls serve only to indicate the climate of community opinion on a specific issue at a particular point in time and cannot be considered to be a contribution to public opinion. Second, community opinion, as reflected in these polls, provides only a framework or context within which policy-making decisions are made by government[1] -- a point which can be, and has been the subject of strong debate.

On the one hand, it was once the view of R.G. Casey, one of Australia's more respected External Affairs Ministers, that public opinion was fundamental to any government sanctioning of a foreign policy decision.[2] Yet, the view has also been expressed that in any meaningful examination of the foreign policy process in Australia, little weight would be given to the role of community

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1 Millar, T.B., Australia in Peace and War, p.43.

2 Casey, R.G., The Conduct of Australia's Foreign Policy, Third Roy Milne Lecture, AIIA, Melbourne, 1952, p.5.

opinion.[1] Nevertheless, the degree to which public opinion influences government policy depends on the kind of knowledge and political involvement which the opinions reflect and by examining opinion polls, a crude evaluation can be made of the general nature of the political commitments on which public opinion rests.

A number of organizations have sought to monitor public opinion regarding foreign and defence policy issues.[2] Sixteen surveys,[3] each polling a separate 'sample' of Australians but using similar approaches,[4] are summarized in this thesis.[5] In each survey, an attempt has been made to ascertain the attitudes of people on a number of specific issues including those related to threats to Australia, communism in Asia, reciprocal government attitudes between Australia and Asia, Australian aid and the East Timor issue. From the responses, a rough profile of prevailing attitudes on Indonesia can be reconstructed and some insight provided into the opinion milieu, and its relationship to the policy-making process.

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1 Boyce, P.J., "The Foreign Policy Process", in P.J. Boyce and J.R. Angel, (eds.), Independence and Alliance: Australia in World Affairs 1976-80, George Allen and Unwin and the AIIA, Sydney, 1983, p.22.

2 See Appendix D.

3 Ibid.

4 Polling organizations work on the theory that a sample of about 2 000 people selected with sufficient care will indicate with considerable accuracy the thinking of the community as a whole -- even if the community covers an entire nation. The sample is selected by random probability: sampling aims to choose the sample in such a way that theoretically every person in the area surveyed has an equal chance of being selected -- or quota sampling where respondents are chosen by selecting quotas (determined from known data such as census statistics) according to age, sex, location, occupation and economic status. Questioning methods vary. The Morgan and APOP get their answers by response, and it is considered that the numbers questioned are far less important than the accuracy of the sample.

5 This chapter confines its analysis of public opinion polls to an examination of the two major community opinion issues of the period -- 'threats to Australia' and 'economic assistance'. The remaining issues/polls are discussed only as they relate to the broader issue of Australia's relationship with Indonesia.

Threats

Since 1967 a number of surveys have been conducted on the question of threats to Australia's security. In terms of changing patterns of public opinion, the late 1960s reflected a fairly stable period with just over fifty percent of the Australian electorate agreeing that Australia was threatened by some country or countries -- only one third felt that no country posed a threat.

In the following years there was a clear lessening in that consciousness, by the mid-1970s, the number of people who saw no threat outnumbered those who did see threats, the former constituting nearly half the electorate. Since then however, and as is assessed in more detail in Chapter Ten, there has been an increase in threat consciousness with the 'no threat' figures reverting back to the 1967 levels and a higher proportion of people being convinced that some countries threaten Australia.[1]

Table 1
THREATS TO AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY
(percentage)

	1967-69	1976	1978	1980
Some Countries threaten Australia	51.6	43.4	45.6	63.1
None threaten Australia	34.3	46.4	42.3	34.0
Can't say	14.1	10.2	12.1	2.9
	100	100	100	100

Table 2
THREATS TO AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY : COUNTRIES NAMED
(by percentage of total population)

	1967-69	1976	1978	1980
China	30.9	17.1	13.9	13.5
Russia	13.5	20.2	15.6	40
Vietnam	10.6	1.8	7.6	7
Indonesia	6.9	9.7	13.5	11.3
Japan	5.5	6.9	9.3	6
America	2.4	3.5	3.1	6.6

Source: Huck, A., "A Note on the Volatility of threats", Australian Outlook, Vol.35, No.1, April 1981, p.89.

Huck's analysis is based on opinion polls. All polls before 1980 were taken by Australian Public Opinion Polls (the Gallup Method). The 1980 poll was conducted by Age Poll, in cooperation with the Department of Political Science, University of Melbourne.

[1] Huck, A., "A Note on the Volatility of Threats", Australian Outlook, Vol.35, No.1, April 1981, pp.88-89. See also Goot, M., "Red, White and Brown : Australian Attitudes to the World Since the Thirties", Australian Outlook, Vol.24, No.2, August 1970, p.192.

Those who agreed that Australia was threatened reflected a wide range of concerns and apprehensions. Moreover, the change in opinion about the countries named has been very marked. The preoccupation with China in the 1960s steadily declined while the Soviet Union increased dramatically into the mid-to-late 1970s, by which time the level of concern about Indonesia was not very different from that about China. However, this was not always the case.

In the course of a survey conducted in late 1967,[1] of over half of those questioned who agreed that some country or countries threatened Australia, 7.1 percent considered Indonesia was a threat, behind China (30.8%), Russia (13.0%) and North Vietnam (9.4%). In 1969[2], with about 50 percent of the electorate continuing to believe that Australia was under threat, Indonesia was still ranked fourth behind the other three countries. While nearly 8 percent considered Indonesia was a threat in 1969, this proportion increased to 10.2 percent in early 1970[3], third behind China (27.1%) and Russia (15.0%). This was not surprising in view of the public reaction to Indonesia's 'Act of Free Choice'. Nevertheless, it could not be said that the Australian Government would, in electoral terms, have been pressured to take a firmer line with Indonesia than they did.

Overall, throughout the 1967-70 period the results reflected relatively stable patterns, with China the major perceived threat to Australian security (30%), ahead of Russia (14%), North Vietnam (10%), Indonesia (8%), and Japan (6%).[4] While this stable pattern is also reflected in an examination of the background of those who saw Australia under threat,[5] the variations in the political sphere

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1 Gallup Poll, No. 194, The Roy Morgan Research Centre, Melbourne, November 1967, pp.34-41.

2 Gallup Poll, No. 203, April 1969, pp.56-64.

3 Ibid., No. 209, February 1970, pp.53-55.

4 Huck, A., "Images of China: 1. The Idea of 'China' in Australian Politics", Australian Outlook, Vol.24, No.3, December 1970, pp.316-319.

5 Analysis by state and by age, for example, reveals little variation, with those in the 30-49 years-of-age grouping expressing the greatest concern about threat overall. This was also true in relation to Indonesia. The older respondents appeared more concerned about Japan (reflecting

proved to provide the most interesting statistics. While Indonesia was seen to be a threat by 8 percent of the electorate, one in every two such voters was L-CP, one in three voted for the ALP and one in ten was a DLP voter.

From these surveys it is clear that on the issue of threat, Australian public opinion was dominated by perceptions of China. While this created latitude for policy leadership in this area for the conservative government, opinion on the threat posed by Indonesia did not alter Australia's Indonesian policy.

Economic Assistance

Few surveys on foreign aid generally have been conducted in Australia. Between 1966 and 1974 only three major polls were taken on this issue, two of which centred specifically on Indonesia.[1] In contrast to the 38 percent of respondents who indicated in September 1965 that economic assistance to Sukarno's Indonesia be stopped a year later,[2] nearly two out of three people thought Australia should at the least maintain its non-military aid to Indonesia, then under the firming control of the Western-leaning General Suharto.[3] While this provided the conservative government with a favourable political climate within which to increase its aid allocation to Indonesia, plans to double it in 1968 from six

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historical experiences) while the younger groups were more preoccupied with China and North Vietnam. Moreover, it was evident that those who lived in the cities were less prone to concerns about threat than their country cousins. In terms of a threat from Indonesia, however, the capital cities and the country areas shared the same level of concern. Men seemed more worried about Indonesia than women who were concerned with threats from Russia and Japan. In occupational terms, the professional and semi-professional group of people were markedly more threat conscious than the lower economic grouping, with those undecided in the latter group in 1967 (30.1%) more committed to an opinion as to a threat by the late 1960s (only 13.7% were undecided).

1 Gallup Poll, No. 185, The Roy Morgan Research Centre, Melbourne, September 1966, pp.30-32 and Poll No. 200, pp.29-31. See also the Age Poll (ASRB Pty. Ltd.) on attitudes to overseas aid, 10 April 1972.

2 See "Australian Public Opinion Polls" (Gallup Polls), Nos. 1836-1851, July-September 1965.

3 Gallup Poll, No. 185, September 1966. See also APOP (Gallup Polls), Nos. 1932-1946, October 1966 - January 1967, p.1.

million to thirteen million dollars met with resistance, indicating that such plans would need to be explained and sold to the public for acceptance. In a Gallup Poll in October 1968,[1] the 22 percent of respondents who favoured the proposed increase in aid to 13 million dollars were offset by the 23 percent who wanted to cut out the existing package of six million dollars.[2] The minority of 22 percent who favoured the increase believed such an increase would not only assist the Indonesians but would promote better relationships. On the other hand, the majority of nearly 60 percent[3] who considered aid should be kept at six million dollars a year believed that not only did Australians have more need for the money but, ironically, that Indonesia should be financially independent.

While Australians generally accepted the principle of giving foreign aid, they believed overwhelmingly by 1972 that charity began at home with Australia's poor and underprivileged. In a survey conducted in April 1972 the majority of those polled believed that aid would be better given on a needs basis, and regardless of the recipient country's politics. At the same time however, such altruism was mixed with a certain amount of skepticism about the way foreign aid programmes operate. For example, most believed that for one reason or another, much of the money collected in Australia did not reach the people who needed it, and considered that it was better to send food and other goods to overseas countries in need, rather than cash. Moreover, there was also a strong body of resistance to the idea of increasing the then level of aid, with more than one in every two people considering that Australia's interests would be better served by spending more on defence.[4]

Whether the general electorate favoured Australia's aid policies or not, it is difficult to argue that they could have influenced government policy. While many in the electorate were skeptical about giving of aid in general, the government would have taken heart from those polls that, up until the mid-1970s, revealed

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1 Gallup Poll, No. 200, October 1968.

2 See Appendix D.

3 65 percent were L-CP voters, and 56 percent ALP voters.

4 See Appendix D.

a small majority of opinion which favoured the continuation and, after 1966, increasing of aid to Indonesia.

In appraising the public opinion on Indonesian and related issues during this period, two points can be made. First, while opinions concerning threat were rooted in an intense (historical) concern for Australia's security, and opinions on aid based on altruistic considerations, Indonesia ironically figured prominently in both. Second, a characteristic of Australian opinion in regard to these issue areas was represented by the 'don't know' answers to the questions. However, this was not unusual when compared to the response to surveys taken on other foreign and defence policy issues. While this could substantiate claims that the general community does not have an interest in such issues, there was a large number of those persons surveyed who consistently responded to the questions.

Groups and Individuals with a Major Interest in Indonesia

1. Australia-Indonesia Business Cooperation Committee

In the 1950s and early 1960s, Australian business groups were disinclined to engage in trade and investment with Indonesia.[1] Due to a lack of structural complementarity between the economics of the two countries, trade was minimal, while investment opportunities were hamstrung not only by the unstable business and political climates in Indonesia, but also by Australian Government monetary policies. While it has been argued that post-coup Australian business interest in Indonesia subsequently burgeoned, marking 'a *volte face* from the attitudes of the previous fifteen years',[2] it was slow to gain momentum. It was not until the early 1970s that increases in activity can be noticed, coinciding with the founding in Melbourne of the Australian-Indonesian Business Cooperation Committee (AIBCC).

Formed in November 1971, under the aegis of the Australian Chamber of Manufacturers, the committee was established to assist commercial relations between the two countries. Chaired by J.B.

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1 See Arndt, H.W., "Trade Relations between Australia and Indonesia", *Economic Record*, Vol.44, June, 1968, pp.168-193.

2 Viviani, N., "Australian Attitudes and Policies towards Indonesia", p.121.

Reid,[1] and the result of a great deal of lobbying by the then Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, S. Sukirno,[2] the concept of the AIBCC was based on the highly successful Australia-Japan Business Cooperation Committee. Its main aims were to foster friendship and understanding between each country's business communities, as well as to promote trade, investment, technical and economic cooperation, and tourism. While other committees dealing with Japan, China and Korea tended to deal in large commodities and to function on a government-to-government level, the AIBCC's role was considered to be more that of an advisory one. Rather than becoming involved in commodity negotiations, it tended towards assisting people who wanted not only to trade with Indonesia but also to engage in investment. This assistance principally took the form of advice and information on trading and other regulations and practices.[3]

In its early stages, the AIBCC was dilatory. While the Indonesians were hopeful it would provide a springboard for joint ventures between the two countries, Australian businessmen were extremely reticent about entering into such undertakings. Such caution was due to remaining (though decreasing) controls in Indonesia over foreign investment and, as Indonesia's Finance Minister, Sultan Hamengku Buwono, was reported as saying at the

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1 J.B. Reid was, during his Chairmanship from November 1971 until September 1975, the Chairman of James Hardie Asbestos Ltd., of Hardie Trading Ltd., and of Mercantile Credits Ltd. He was also a director of Avis Rent-a-Car Pty. Ltd., and a director of BHP. James Hardie Asbestos, Hardie Trading and BHP all had involvements in Indonesia (Prospects for Trade between Australia and Indonesia. Senate Standing Committee on Trade and Commerce, (Official Hansard Transcript of Evidence) (Evidence) or (Report), Canberra, 1974. Vol.1, p.206 (hereafter Senate Committee, Prospects for Trade).

2 The Bulletin, 11 December 1971. Sukarno was later to be identified in the 1975 Senate Report to be a partner in a major Australian holding in Indonesia. See Eldridge, P.J., Indonesia and Australia: the politics of aid and development since 1966. Development Studies Centre Monograph No. 18, ANU, Canberra, 1979, p.108.

3 Senate Committee, Prospects for Trade (Evidence), pp.206-207. Two other organizations played a role in shaping economic relations between Australia and Asia -- the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) and the Private Investment Company for Asia (PICA). See Eldridge, P.J., Indonesia and Australia, pp.111-112 and Senate Committee, Prospects for Trade, (Report), pp.132-133.

founding ceremony of the AIBCC, to the lingering impression in Australia of the policies of the Sukarno government.[1] However, it did play an important role. Whereas in 1969 there were only three major Australian investments in Indonesia, this had increased to thirty by late 1971, including offshore oil exploration near Surabaya; Indo-Milk, a milk-processing factory; and Kiwi, a shoepolish conglomerate.[2] By 1974 this had ballooned, with two hundred registered members of the AIBCC,[3] ranging in size from Australia's largest companies to sole traders and consultants, and with interests in mining, building materials, manufacturing, banking, metal products, and engineering and architectural services.[4] Meanwhile, its counterpart in Indonesia had been established,[5] and the AIBCC sought a closer relationship with other bodies with similar interests to its own, including the Australian-Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, whose members were drawn mainly from import-export firms.[6] These developments were underpinned by the construction of a web of linkages between the Indonesian Embassy and the Department of Overseas Trade[7] and Foreign Affairs[8], both in Australia and Indonesia.[9] By 1974-75

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1 The Bulletin, 11 December 1971.

2 Ibid.

3 Senate Committee, Prospects for Trade (Evidence) p.206.

4 Senate Committee, Prospects for Trade (Report), p.131.

5 The Indonesian-Australian Business Cooperation Committee (IABCC) was established in July 1972. The inaugural President was E. Kowara, Vice-President of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce. Eldridge points out that Kowara's son is married to President Suharto's daughter. (Indonesia and Australia, p.110).

6 Seminars attended by both Indonesian and Australian businessmen and officials were held by the AIBCC in 1972 (Canberra), 1973 (Sydney) and 1975 (Melbourne). The IABCC held a seminar in Jakarta in 1974, coinciding with an Australian Trade Display in Indonesia that year.

7 For a background on its role see the Department of Overseas Trade submission in Senate Committee, Prospects for Trade (Evidence), Vol.II, pp.1351-1442.

8 The department's role is less well documented in its evidence (submission not documented), Ibid., pp.1071-1088.

however, international and domestic developments within Indonesia did not auger well for these fledgling contacts. On one level, world recession and the oil crisis of that period was exacerbated, on another, by the unsettled domestic political situation of early 1974. In essence, these 'features ... produced a changed set of business conditions for joint venture entrepreneurs and people in trade'.[1]

In late 1974, the Senate Standing Committee on Trade and Commerce held an enquiry into the prospects for Australian trade relations with Indonesia. In its submission[2] to this enquiry, the AIBCC focused directly on these features. First, it considered that while the oil crisis had affected the availability of raw materials for the manufacturing sector, consumer goods and dependent services, hence causing a world-wide shortage of goods available on the open market, the increases in Indonesia's foreign exchange earnings augured well for Indonesia's economy in terms of growth and development. The AIBCC considered that while international developments such as these 'caused nations and their business communities to reassess priorities of national importance', Indonesia faced the prospect of a turnaround in her economic position. This meant eliminating, in two years, the international debts that had been rescheduled for repayment up to the last years of the 20th century and, while placing strain on the existing infrastructure and demanding more expertise, any movement towards an economic 'take-off'.[3]

Second, the AIBCC also considered that the political situation in Indonesia, as evidenced by the Tanaka riots, not only indicated a greater sense of economic nationalism in the government and people of Indonesia, but also a hardening of government attitudes

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9 Kelman, B.N., Address to AIBCC Luncheon, 19 October 1976. Kelman succeeded Reid on 30 September 1975.

1 Senate Committee, Prospects for Trade (Evidence), p.202.

2 The submission took the form of a speech given by Reid at a joint meeting of the IABCC and AIBCC, held in Jakarta on 25-26 April 1974. See Senate Committee, Prospects for Trade (Evidence), pp.201-205.

3 Senate Committee, Prospects for Trade (Evidence), p.201.

and policies towards foreign business.[1] While the AIBCC counselled wise planning on the part of the Indonesians if they wished to maximize any long-term benefits that might accrue from their improving economic position -- focusing on major areas of concern[2] and interest[3] -- its major preoccupation was:

> that foreign investors are being actively disencouraged and are no longer welcome, in the light of an increase in the restrictions and performance requirements of foreign business activity. There is also concern that perhaps the rules laid down at the commencement of a joint-venture investment will be changed, adversely to the foreigner during the early years of the investment ... businessmen who are committing large sums of money, skilled personnel and time must have reasonable prospects of fair business conditions which must remain stable....[4]

In 1968, Professor H.W. Arndt stated that, in marked contrast to the optimism expressed in the mid-1930s about Australia-Dutch East Indies trade, 'Australia and Indonesia, two large neighbouring trading nations, hardly trade with each other'.[5] Over a decade later, Arndt was to reaffirm this with the view that, 'Economically, neither country is very important to the other'.[6] Professor Arndt concluded however:

> It is very desirable that both countries adopt policies which will promote ... bilateral trade, not only for its

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1 Ibid.

2 The 'commercially frustrating' port-handling and shipping facilities, and the shortage of educated Indonesians with 'the practical experience of applying their ability and training in industry...'. (Ibid., p.203).

3 The possible establishment of a stock exchange and money market as a platform for Indonesian finance and joint venture business opportunities, and the development of government sponsored savings schemes. This would include teaching rural people to save, and providing them with the opportunity 'to share directly in the growth and prosperity flowing from investment'. Fundamental to these considerations was Australia's foreign aid, but with greater emphasis on practical skill. (Ibid., p.204).

4 Ibid., p.203.

5 Arndt, H.W., "Trade Relations between Australia and Indonesia", p.168.

6 Arndt, H.W., "Economic Relations between Australia and Indonesia", in J.A.C. Mackie, (ed.), Indonesia: The Making of a Nation, RSPS, ANU, Canberra, 1980, p.752.

> direct economic benefits but also because it can serve as one way of bringing the two nations closer together.[1]

It can be argued from this, and other writings,[2] that Arndt was an advocate of an economically strong Indonesia, and that this would provide Australia with increasing marketing opportunities for Australian products. It can also be concluded that, along with Arndt, the AIBCC shared these aims and ideals. In the years following the committee's establishment, efforts were directed to sustaining them through a network of official and unofficial agencies. This gave rise to a modest, although important, framework of linkages within which the AIBCC played a pivoted role. It is in this context that the AIBCC's political role should be viewed.

Still in their infancy, however, these links were to undergo stress due to two factors -- the difficulties that businesses encountered in dealing with a country such as Indonesia, and encroaching worldwide recession. This was exacerbated by the unsettled domestic situation of early 1974. The AIBCC's immediate reactions related to the effect of these events on Australian interests in Indonesia, and the desirability of stable conditions for the maintenance of an Australian business interest generally. An overriding consideration however, was that it was considered to be very much in these interests to tread softly with regard to Indonesia's hardening attitude on foreign investment and to ride out the problems of this period -- an attitude they sustained during the East Timor crisis, a year later.

2. Australian-Indonesian Association

Although the idea for an Australian-Indonesian Association (AIA)[3] first surfaced in the 1940s, it was not until the mid-1950s that the structure and functions were clarified and the organization established in Victoria. Founded by a group of people with backgrounds in the universities, the Volunteer Graduate

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1 Ibid., p.753.

2 See Chapter Ten.

3 Most of this information on the aims and structure of the organization in the pre-coup period is drawn from Viviani, N., "Australian Attitudes and Policies towards Indonesia", pp.116-117.

Scheme, and as hosts to visiting Indonesian students (on Australia's Colombo Plan), it began with the specific and non-political aim 'to promote and foster friendships, understanding and good relations between the people of Australia and Indonesia'.[1]

The AIA subsequently developed strong links with two major universities -- Monash and Melbourne -- and with Australians who had visited Indonesia as tourists, as well as those who had worked and studied there. By the mid-1960s, the organization's membership had reached 200, while its interests were sustained through a variety of functions that dealt with Indonesia, including social functions, informal discussion groups and conferences.

The AIA's philosophical underpinnings precluded it from any kind of political orientation, thus, as an organization, it refrained from entering into the debate that slowly engulfed the relationship in the 1950s and early 1960s -- West New Guinea and confrontation. However, while it preferred to provide a balance to the negative tone that was to emerge throughout this debate, it did not prevent individuals from providing critical commentaries on both the Australian and Indonesian Government's policies.[2] Yet, the association:

> kept awake a positive interest in Indonesia which was in danger of being swamped in the fear-dominated climate of the early 1960s. Its members are heirs to the spirit of confidence in Indonesia of the 1940s, and they seem to share some of the idealism apparent at that time. While the Association has sought an apolitical stance, it was inevitable that some members would oppose government policies ... and spread some views within and outside the Association.[3]

In September 1970, H. O'Neill, writing in the organization's Annual Report, reflected:

> As the Indonesian government proceeds with the tasks of national planning, the Australian government is very interested in helping. Australian businessmen, technicians, scientists and economists are responding to requests for assistance and Indonesians in positions of responsibility are being invited under the Colombo plan to gain experience here ... the Association, which was

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1 Australian Indonesian Association of Victoria (hereafter AIA (Vic.)), Annual Report, 1964-65, 17 September 1965, p.1.

2 Viviani, N., "Australian Attitudes and Policies towards Indonesia", p.117.

3 Ibid., pp.117-118.

> significantly sustained by long-term personal friendships is not yet properly geared to the new level of business and institutional links which now appear to be prevailing.[1]

In the intervening post-coup period the relationships had burgeoned, particularly at the political level. The association's membership, now totalling 336 and embracing wider and more diverse interests, compelled the organization to continue providing opportunities for interaction between the people of the two countries. This also required it to achieve a balance between purely social functions, which provided the members with a first hand visual and oral experience of Indonesian culture, and those which enabled it to provide information, by now in increasing demand, on Indonesian socio-economic and political developments.

While social gatherings provided visitors with friendship and hospitality (including in 1968, Foreign Minister Malik),[2] efforts over the years were directed towards humanitarian tasks, including fundraising, drug appeals and disaster relief activities,[3] in conjunction with the Red Cross (1970)[4] and Community Aid Abroad (CAA) (1971).[5] The failure of the Cultural Agreement to promote increased activity in this area led the association to make unsuccessful approaches for assistance to Australia's External Affairs Minister, Freeth. Nevertheless, the establishment in 1969 of an Advisory Committee to the Minister of Education and Science heartened the association as evidence of an increasing government interest in the teaching of Asian languages and culture in general.[6]

Throughout this period, lectures and discussions groups, centring on socio-economic developments in Indonesia, were becoming a major part of the association's activities. They developed in

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1 AIA (Vic.), Annual Report, 1969-70, September 18, 1970, p.4.

2 AIA (Vic.), Annual Report, 1968-69, September, 1968, p.1.

3 AIA (Vic.), Annual Report, 1969, September 26, 1969, p.2.

4 AIA (Vic.), Annual Report, 1970, September 18, 1970, p.2.

5 AIA (Vic.), Annual Report, 1971, September, 1971, p.3.

6 AIA (Vic.), Annual Report, 1969, September 26, 1969, pp. 1-3.

sophistication over the years, particularly as the issues emerging grew in complexity, and began imposing on the Australian-Indonesian relationship. Early discussions took the form of lectures by guest speakers, with Indonesianists such as Professors Legge and Feith, and J.A.C. Mackie, predominant.[1] There was also the occasional conference and convention; however, these were to increase in frequency and importance in terms of the association's overall activities.

Early lectures and discussions tended to focus on broad themes related to the relationship,[2] but by 1969 the focus was narrowing onto specific issue areas related to the Indonesian domestic scene, paralleling the increasing awareness within the community.[3] Meanwhile, links were being established and consolidated with senior academics, public servants and journalists from Jakarta. The association also provided a platform for visitors from Indonesia to meet with representatives from Australian firms which had expressed an interest in 'joint ventures' in Indonesia.[4]

However, this aspect of the association's activities, and indeed of the Australian-Indonesian relationship was proving problematic. As the President of the AIA observed, late in 1973 on the growing issue of the nature and extent of the organization's relationship with Australian firms conducting business in Indonesia:

> Australian business is becoming increasingly active in Indonesia and the appropriate relationship between our Association and such local business is one of unresolved

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1 All of Monash University.

2 For example, a weekend conference was held early in 1965 with the theme: "Australia-Indonesia 1945-1949 and Today". The conference was attended by AIA members from fledgling associations in Canberra and NSW, as well as by the Indonesian Ambassador, Major-General R.A. Kosasih and staff from the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra. AIA (Vic.) Annual Report, 1964-65, p.3.

3 In 1969, the AIA convention was held at Cowes. The Indonesian Ambassador, Lt. General Hidajat was present and lectures were given by ANU's Dr Pangestu who spoke on "Economic Development under the Order Baru" and Ulf Sundhaussen from Monash University who spoke on "The Military and Civilians in Politics", Annual Report, 1969, p.3.

4 AIA (Vic.), Annual Report, 1970, p.3.

> issues of our Association [sic]... There are indeed uncertainties in our feelings and thoughts. We are conscious of the need for economic and social improvement in Indonesia and this can certainly be helped by foreign business activities. We would like to do all we can to assist Australian business activities which has as a substantial concomitant an increase in the welfare of the Indonesian people. We are at the same time conscious of the criticisms of current economic policies and of some of the actions of foreign companies in Indonesia and of the widespread ambivalence that does still exist in Indonesian circles towards foreign investments.[1]

This not only reflected an understanding of the changing nature of the relationship but also the changing character of the debate engendered by it, particularly as it related to Indonesian matters, and the way it put stress on the philosophical underpinnings of the association's charter. That there was more Australian interest in Indonesia at this time than at any other time in the relationship was evidenced by an:

> increased membership, the number of people attending our language classes and those conducted by other bodies, the artifact shops, the cultural displays [and]... the increasing number of visitors to Indonesia from all sections of the Australian community....[2]

However, these positive developments were being compromised by dissenting views within Australia -- a situation that drew from the association's president in late 1972 the view that 'it is quite clear that there is an accelerating need for an organization of this kind to try to ameliorate abrasive cultural contacts' between the two countries. That year the president of the association had been called on by the Australian Government to represent community interests on official occasions during the Suharto visit in February.[3]

Over the next two years, the association's membership increased to well over 500 and its activities intensified, with thriving language classes, lecture series, weekend conferences and social functions giving it the characteristics of a cultural institute, as the community interest in Indonesia deepened and broadened. At the same time, the issues that touched the

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[1] AIA (Vic.), "Annual Report, 1972-73", AIA News, October-November, 1973, pp.5-6.

[2] Ibid., p.6.

[3] AIA (Vic.), Annual Report, September 1972, p.4.

association, too, broadened and deepened.[1] However, the Tanaka riots in early 1974, while reflecting 'the suspicions and the extent of the feelings which exist or can be aroused over this vexed question of foreign entrepreneurship and its attendant social problems', strengthened the resolve of the association to maintain its momentum and composure as a cultural body 'where Indonesians and Australians could meet and share their experiences without any suspicion of their being used in the pursuit of anybody's vexed economic interests'.[2]

Dr Viviani has argued that while the AIA in the pre-coup period had some long-term influence on some Australian attitudes -- through building on existing pro-Indonesian attitudes and drawing Indonesia and its problems into the public arena to facilitate wider understanding and appreciation -- it was:

> not entirely apolitical, and specific activities of individuals may combine with these to have political effects ... but their [AIA's] political influence, either institutionally or through their members individually, has been of such diffuse long term nature that its impact on community attitudes is difficult to evaluate.[3]

This analysis could also extend to embrace the organization's activities in the post-coup period, well into the 1970s. In considering the association's broadened activities during this

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1 For example, the 1972 Convention focused on student involvement in Indonesian and Australian politics (Ibid., p.2). In 1973, seminars on Indonesia's economic and domestic political developments were conducted by Harold Crouch and Jamie Mackie. Nancy Viviani delivered a lecture on the historical development of Australia's relations with Indonesia and in early 1974, Dr K. Thomas of Latrobe spoke at a Presidential Weekend on Indonesia's second development plan. Three important seminars were conducted later in 1974 in conjunction with the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies at Monash University: "The thaw of 1973, the Anti-Tanaka riots and the Aftermath"; "Current development strategy and its critics, with special reference to rural poverty"; and "Australian-Indonesian relations - past trends and future policies". Discussions were lead by Messrs J.A.C. Mackie, Nazaruddin, Sjamsuddin, Zainu'ddin, Harold Crouch, and Ron Hatley, as well as by Doctors Herbert Feith, Ken Thomas and Barbara Harvey.

2 AIA (Vic.), "Annual Report 1973-74", AIA News, November 1974, p.7.

3 Viviani, N., "Australian Attitudes and Policies towards Indonesia", p.118.

time, it could be argued that its attempts to familiarize its members and others in the community, with socio-economic and political developments in 'New Order' Indonesia, had an important influence on how these Australian's perceived Indonesia. Given that many in this group came from various sectors of society -- businesses, schools and churches -- it is also likely that this influence reached out into the wider community.

This situation is even more interesting when the focus is turned to those persons who were actively involved in providing these interpretations of Indonesia over the years -- Mackie, Arndt, Legge, Feith, Crouch and Viviani. Each had his or her own interpretations of an Indonesia that was becoming increasing embroiled in highly complex and controversial issues, and some would emerge as principals in the debate generated by Indonesia's actions in East Timor. Thus, it was likely these interpretations transcended the association's philosophical ideals, while also penetrating the Australian community. Ironically, AIA attempts to sustain a positive interest in Indonesia in the issue-dominated climate of the late 1960s and early 1970s were being placed under increasing stress, not least from within its own ranks.

3. Collective Influence of the AIBCC and AIA

Although it is difficult to gauge the full impact of these groups, they did keep officials and Ministers aware that sections of the public were concerned with specific Indonesian issues. At the same time, they were able to keep the issues alive in the minds of the public and offered organizations through which political action could be taken. While the AIBCC promoted the interests of the private sector and had a strong influence in sustaining domestic political support for the Indonesian Government and its economic policies, the AIA's activities, through substantial but informal links to the universities, were more widely focused. However, by virtue of such links, the AIA found its agenda was focusing increasingly on many of the issues that concerned the AIBCC, particularly Indonesia's economic development, although its perspective differed and, it seems, its capacity and success in translating it into political pressure was more constrained.

There is evidence to suggest that the AIBCC influenced the decision-making process through its close personal and political ties with the government and through its links with the

bureaucracy. Moreover, it is evident that influence was sought as an opinion-group (according to the type of role played in the political process) by means of conferences and public statements. The AIA, on the other hand, while able to establish similar links, as well as with aid, business and church groups, established no group/group alliances on any particular issue, leaving us to conclude it had no discernible decisive influence on government policy on issues of major interest to it.

4. The Academic Community

A survey of the academic community has presented the opinions of a small number of individuals whose writings have stood out during this period. These authors have shared a specific interest in either Australian-Indonesian relations or Indonesian issues (the latter are only examined where they impinge on the relationship) and are distinct because they have taken more than a transient interest in raising issues that have been of direct relevance to Australia's Indonesia policies. Five academics made major contributions to the debate on Australian-Indonesian issues -- J.A.C. Mackie,[1] H.W. Arndt,[2] P.J. Eldridge,[3] H. Feith[4] and R. Mortimer[5]. Bruce Grant[6] and Peter Hastings[7] also provided fertile

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1 Formerly lecturer in History at the University of Melbourne, Director of the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies at Monash University, and presently Professor of Social and Political Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, at the Australian National University (ANU).

2 Formerly Professor of Economics, Research School of Pacific Studies, ANU.

3 Then Lecturer, Department of Political Science, University of Tasmania.

4 Reader in Politics, Monash University.

5 The late Rex Mortimer was Associate Professor, Department of Government, University of Sydney. Formerly Professor of Politics and Administrative Studies, University of Papua New Guinea.

6 Journalist, academic, former Ambassador to India during the Whitlam Government, and author.

7 Journalist, academic and former Editor, each of the Sydney Morning Herald, the Australian, the Bulletin and New Guinea.

grounds for the debate that began taking shape within months of the rise of the 'New Order'. While other journalists[1] made a strong contribution to the debate, these two correspondents, Melbourne and Sydney-based respectively, also published widely in the academic press. The purpose here is not to examine their contributions in the daily press (as already covered), but to briefly shadow their academic writings in order to identify their important views and positions on the relationship.

J.A.C. Mackie and H.W. Arndt were to publish seven major articles[2] in the academic press in the decade before the East Timor issue emerged, as well as many other papers on Australian foreign policy,[3] Indonesian politics[4] and the Indonesian economy.[5]

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7 Journalist, academic and former Editor, each of the Sydney Morning Herald, the Australian, the Bulletin and New Guinea.

1 Stanley Karnow (Australian), Frank Palmos (Sunday Mail), Creighton Burns (Age), Dennis Bloodworth (Bulletin).

2 Mackie wrote: "The Culture Agreement -- Prospects and Possibilities", Quadrant, Vol.13, No.5, September/October 1968, pp.117-127; "Indonesia and Australia", in H.G. Gelber, (ed.), Problems of Australian Defence. Melbourne, Oxford University Press, pp.32-52; "Australia's Relations with Indonesia: Principles and Policies, I. Australian Outlook, Vol.28, No.1, 1974, pp.3-14; "Australia's Relations with Indonesia: Principles and Policies, II", Australian Outlook, Vol.28, No.2, August 1974, pp.168-178.

Arndt wrote: "Trade Relations Between Australia and Indonesia", The Economic Record, Vol.44, No.106, June 1968, pp.168-194; "The Indonesian Economy: Problems and Opportunities for Australia", Chapter 17 in Arndt, H.W., A Small Rich Industrial Country. Melbourne, Cheshire, 1968, pp.218-227; "Australian Economic Aid to Indonesia", Australian Outlook, Vol.24, No.2, August 1970, pp.124-139.

3 For example Mackie wrote "Reconsidering Australian Foreign Policy", Australia's Neighbours, No.50/51, November-December 1967, pp.4-5; (with M. Osborne), "The Domino Fallacy", Australia's Neighbours, No.54/55, March-April 1968, pp.1-4.

4 Mackie also contributed the following: "The Commission of Four Report on Corruption", Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies, Vol.6, No.3, November 1970, pp.87-102; "Civil-Military Relations and the 1971 Elections in Indonesia", Australian Outlook, Vol.24, No.3, December 1970, pp.250-262; "Indonesia in the 1980s", Australian Outlook, Vol.25, No.3, December 1971, pp.334-344; "The Golkar Victory and party-aliran alignments" in Oey Hong Lee, (ed.), Indonesia After the 1971 Elections, London, Kuala Lumpur,

In effect, their writings, along with those of Professor Feith,[1] provided the intellectual and moral framework within which the national debate at this level emerged, drawing others like a magnet.

One of the most sensible and important writings appeared in Quadrant in 1969.[2] In a cautiously cynical celebration of the signing of the Cultural Agreement between the two countries -- a paradox in view of the paucity of contacts at that level -- Mackie considered the agreement was unlikely to be viable due to a number of underlying considerations: Australia's heritage, European in character and fortified by a European-oriented educational system; the paucity of commercial interaction between the two countries -- normally a 'mainspring' for political and cultural relations and, in the case of Australian-Indonesian relations, much stronger in the mid-1950s; and Australia's modified isolationism.[3]

Mackie believed that this was all the more reason for closer

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5 Arndt, for example, wrote "Economic Prospects for the 1980's" Australian Outlook, Vol.25, No.3, December 1971, pp.319-334; "Regional Wage Differentials". Bulletin of Indonesian Economics Studies (BIES), Vol.8, No.1, March 1972, pp.89-92; "PT Krakatau Steel", BIES, Vol.4, No.2, July 1975, pp.127-136. Professor Arndt also published extensive surveys throughout this period on Indonesia's economic performance in the BIES's "Survey to Recent Developments, 1966-75, various issues.

1 While not all Feith's writings listed here will be considered, he was a steady contributor to the debate on Indonesia's regime and their policies. See for example, "Indonesia -- Blot on the New Order", New Republic, Vol.158, April 13, 1968, pp.17-21; "Suharto's Search for a Political Format", Indonesia (Ithaca), No.6, October 1968, pp.88-105; "Southeast Asia and Neo-Colonialism", Paper presented at The Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) Conference: Australia, Papua New Guinea and Southeast Asia, 9-11 May 1975, subsequently published in E. Wolfers, (ed.), Australia's Northern Neighbours Melbourne, Nelson for AIIA, 1976; "Political Control, Class Formation and Legitimacy in Suharto's Indonesia", (Paper presented to the Melbourne Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, 16 May 1976. Subsequently published in Kabar Seberang/Sulating Maphilindo, No.2, June 1977. Feith also published in the Australian newspapers.

2 Mackie, J.A.C., "The Cultural Agreement -- Prospects and Possibilities", Quadrant, Vol.13, No.5, September/October 1988.

3 Mackie, J.A.C., "The Cultural Agreement", pp.118-120.

synthesis to take place between, on one level, the planning of Asian language programmes for Australian schools and universities and, on another, a nationwide effort towards cultural bridge-building. Moreover, as he argued forcefully and convincingly, and was to do so for the next decade:

> The benefits of any closer cultural relations we have with Indonesia are going to depend not just on the piecemeal exchange of ideas and techniques - theirs artistic, ours scientific or technological - but upon building up opportunities for personal contacts on a basis of equality and mutuality, so that there will be above all a sharing of experiences within some continuing framework.[1]

Integral here was the need for an Australian equivalent to the 'Ford Foundation' or 'British Council' to pave the way, acting as a vehicle of cultural contacts while coordinating activities and the flow of information between the two countries.

While Mackie was adamant that this process would need to involve movement in both directions, and would depend on a strong governmental foundation in each country, he shied away from extrapolating on the role that government aid/assistance had in this process. He preferred instead to identify 'other areas where there is scope for private initiatives, and at the same time, the sort of two-way collaboration for the sake of mutual benefit which is probably an essential condition of any meaningful relationship with each other'.[2] This centred on the scholastic and intellectual arenas, and the need for intellectuals in both countries to gain their bearings in relation to each other's society. To Mackie this was particularly important because the Western scholar -- hampered by difficulties in securing research materials, an 'understanding' and 'feel' for Indonesia, as well as by contrasting intellectual frames of reference -- needed to:

> 'get inside' that frame of reference [otherwise]... his understanding of Indonesia will be skin deep.... And unless their controversies and ours about problems of mutual interest can be pulled closer together, we are both losers.'

Fundamental to this process was a need for Australians to have an understanding not only of Indonesia's problems and the debates they

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[1] Ibid., p.123.

[2] Mackie, J.A.C., "The Cultural Agreement", p.124.

generated, but also of their significance to Australia.[1]

This notion of interpretation was a fundamental concern to Professor Mackie throughout the 1960s and 1970s and may go some way towards explaining his intellectual endeavours in relation to Indonesian society and its politics. These began in 1966 when Mackie was careful to provide a level-headed analysis of the immediate post-coup period; in particular, Indonesia's external behaviour and 'the durability of the new, tranquil phase of Indonesia's relations with her neighbours'.[2] While they were strong interpretative contributions, they were also part of any ongoing process of conveying to his readers the subtleties, and the role, of the Suharto regime within Indonesian society.

Over the next decade he visited Indonesia on countless occasions and it was not surprising, therefore, that Mackie remained a consistent and articulate observer of developments within that country. However, his writings began to reflect a sense of struggle, as he himself not only had to come to terms with these developments but also with the fast emerging differences of political views on issues related to human rights, the nature of the military regime, and economic development. The economic development debate in particular gained momentum in the early 1970s, as criticism began to focus on the unequal interdependence between the wealthy Western countries and the Third World States. The main element of this criticism centred on the theory of development within these states, and the Western stimulated notion that growth should be their major goal, a notion strongly embraced by H.W. Arndt.

While Arndt was not a developmental theorist, he had been involved throughout the 1960s in the construction and application

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1 Ibid., p.126.

2 Mackie, J.A.C., "Indonesia's New Look: An end to Confrontation?", New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and Southeast Asia, September/October 1966, p.55. See also his "Indonesia and Australia", pp.32-52. Mackie documents the ideological and political factors that had underlined Australia's relations with Indonesia since 1945, examining three sets of issues in post-1966 relations: (a) the problems of regional security arrangements in the wake of the British and American military withdrawals; (b) the retention of Australian forces in Malaysia and Singapore; and (c) the West New Guinea and Papua New Guinea questions (pp.43-52).

of development programmes within the region, particularly in Indonesia. A strong advocate of economic growth in Third World States, Arndt believed that the solution to the economic dilemmas of those States lay in large-scale industrialization -- in the hands of indigenous technocrats however, based on Western assistance and participation.[1]

Moving through the late 1960s into the new decade, Arndt increasingly saw that Indonesia's problems lay not only in overpopulation and underemployment, but also in corruption, bureaucracy and the severe shortage of skilled personnel in the public and private sectors.[2] Meanwhile, Arndt prescribed balance-of-payment aid and long-term capital assistance, even though he had prognosticated in 1968 that, 'to expect Indonesia to enjoy reasonable economic stability and substantial economic development over the next five years requires a major act of faith'.[3]

Indonesia's stability was a fundamental theme throughout Arndt's writings on Australia-Indonesian relations, and Indonesia's politics and economy. He considered developments in Indonesia, for better or worse, would 'involve the whole region and become enmeshed in world politics', and that Australia's interests, were bound to the political stability of Southeast Asia generally. In this context, Australian economic aid was to figure prominently in future analyses by Arndt on the rehabilitation of the Indonesian economy. At first he was of the view that Australian energies in this regard would be best directed towards mobilizing Western donors (for example, the Tokyo Club) to ensure Indonesia's economic rehabilitation.[4] This would not only prove to be strategically important for Australia, it could also provide Australia with

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1 See Arndt, H.W., A Small Rich Industrial Country, p.225. For a critical analysis of Arndt's philosophy see Mortimer, R., "From Ball to Arndt", in R. Mortimer, (ed.), Showcase State. Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1973, p.1.

2 See Arndt, H.W., A Small Rich Industrial Country, p.223 ff; also Arndt's surveys in the BIES throughout this period.

3 Ibid., p.226.

4 Arndt, H.W., A Small Rich Industrial Country, p.227.

brighter prospects for a long-term trading partnership.[1] Hitherto, trade between the two countries had been shallow and the potential in the short term did not look promising.

Arndt broached this area of Australia-Indonesia relations with a great deal of pessimism. He effectively illustrated in 1968 in the Economic Review[2] the paucity of contacts on this level, due essentially to historical disassociation and a lack of structural complementarity. This situation was further exacerbated by Indonesia's political and economic troubles during the Sukarno period.[3] While the bulk of Arndt's analysis illustrated well the interaction of these obstacles to trade in the past -- primarily Australian exports to Indonesia and Indonesian non-oil exports to Australia -- he was no more confident that these could be overcome in the immediate future either. Moreover, he contended that oil -- the largest component of trade between the two countries since the mid-1930s[4] -- would decrease in importance through the 1970s.

There were, however, other areas for opportunities between the two countries. In particular, he considered Indonesia's increasing demands for industrial products and capital equipment would open up doors to Australia's manufacturing sector. Arndt was adamant that:

> Indonesia, like other large and over-populated developing countries, must industrialize... Indonesia's important requirements will be... to expand agricultural production, fertilizers, chemicals... agricultural machinery... equipment for basic industries, such as road and rail transport, communications, shipping, ports, power and irrigation.[5]

By 1971, Arndt had to struggle in his writings with the same problems that confronted Mackie. Writing in 1971 for example, Arndt considered Australia's aid to Indonesia was inadequate, something that concerned him in view of 'the great importance Australia attached to Indonesia and to her recovery under the New

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1 Ibid., p.224.

2 Arndt, H.W., "Trade Relations Between Australia and Indonesia", pp.168-193.

3 Ibid., pp.169-173.

4 See Table I, Ibid., p.169.

5 Ibid., p.192.

Order'.[1] Aid now amounted to A$30 million, and was being disbursed in the IGGI context, with part of the allocation directed toward Balance of Payments support (Bonus Export - BE). This component ran into difficulties in 1968-69 due, among other things,[2] to regularly changing regulations, and to the fact that 'most of the products of Australian industries, even when they were competitive in quality and price, were unknown to Indonesian importers'.[3]

The lack of interest shown by Australian investors by the turn of the new decade also disappointed Arndt. He considered that Australia's prospects far outweighed her motivation and initiative, because, of the 220 investment projects approved in 1970, only five were Australian. This was not only due to an indifferent attitude on the part of the Australian Government to overseas investment by Australian companies but also to a manufacturing industry that had only recently begun to look for export markets.[4] Nevertheless, Australia's weak performance[5] did not detract from Indonesia's economic prospects and performance. In fact, Indonesia's economic gains, although slow, provided sustenance for Arndt, and gave him not only an opportunity to promote the fundamental role that Western technology and know-how had played in this process, but

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1 Arndt, H.W., "Australia's Economic Aid to Indonesia", p.133.

2 Arndt focused on the complexities of the Indonesian Foreign Exchange Market, and criticized the Australian Government. He considered that the latter could have shown more generosity by waiving the requirement that BE aid be spent on Australian products. Arndt, H.W., "Australian Economic Aid to Indonesia", p.134.

3 Ibid., p.131.

4 Arndt, H.W., " Australian Economic Aid to Indonesia", pp.136-137. The Australian Government provided facilities for investment insurance (Export Payment Insurance Corporation) against non-commercial risks; however, this was limited to investments which directly promoted the export of Australian goods. In a postscript to his article, "Australian Economic Aid to Indonesia", Arndt noted the improvement in Australian investment patterns, although he conceded its overall contribution to the economic development of Indonesia was likely to remain marginal.

5 The Gorton government came under continual criticism from the Opposition during this period in the Parliament, particularly from Whitlam and Grassby (See Chapter Five). The Australian press also took to the government on these issues (See Chapter Four).

also to point out that such a role could only benefit other Southeast Asian countries.[1] However, there was a warning that any optimism regarding Indonesia's performance and long-term prospects could be eroded by three factors:

(a) a premature decline in foreign aid;

(b) rising economic nationalism and public impatience with living standards, resulting in social revolt; and,

(c) as occurred in the 1950s, a slackening of development efforts due to friction among the Indonesian leadership, to the entrenched bureaucracy, to depressed export prices and to a run of bad seasons.[2]

Arndt was to maintain his arguments and their underlying assumptions for the remainder of the period,[3] defending his approach vigorously at the Senate enquiry in 1974 into Australia's trading relations with Indonesia. However, by this time a new element had entered into the debate on economic development in Indonesia, and Australia's contribution to it. In an address delivered at a seminar at the Australian National University in Canberra in August 1974, Arndt said:

> For contemporary critics of development without equality Indonesia has, at least in this part of the world, become the "showcase state". Paucity of hard facts about the distribution of income and wealth has lent a free rein to strong opinions. And the fact that development policy in Indonesia has in the last few years been the responsibility of professional economists has led the critics, and especially the political scientists among them, to conclude with alacrity that the fault has been with the economic polices adopted.[4]

Arndt was referring to criticisms that were emerging in the early 1970s and which cast doubt on the steady growth and strength of economic conditions in Indonesia. In particular, his reference to

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1 See, for example, his 1971 publication entitled, "Economic Prospects for the 1980s", pp.319-333.

2 Ibid., p.329 ff.

3 See his surveys in the BIES, 1971-75.

4 Arndt, H.W., "Development and Equality: The Indonesian Case." A paper delivered at the ANU on 27 August 1974, cited in his submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Industry and Trade (Prospects for Trade Between Australia and Indonesia, p.21.

Indonesia as a 'showcase state' was inspired by the publication in 1973 of Dr Rex Mortimer's book entitled Showcase State: the illusion of Indonesia's 'accelerated modernization'.

Mortimer, a senior academic from the University of Sydney, had published extensively on Indonesian affairs under the 'New Order', predominantly within a left-wing ideological framework,[1] and was to engage this framework in setting the stage for a later understanding within Australia of the events that took place in Jakarta in early 1974. Against a background of discussion and criticism of the generally accepted concept of development and its application in the Indonesian case, the book examined the socio-economic and political policies of the Suharto government. While these policies had been accepted as having introduced an era of 'political moderation and economic rationality', and 'social calm and economic progress',[2] Mortimer and his co-authors sought to illustrate that these policies perpetuated Indonesia's economic dependency and, in serving the interests of the Indonesian elite (especially its military element), created injustice and inequality within Indonesian society.[3]

These writings were important contributions to the evolving debate on Indonesian issues, and are relevant here in three regards. First, they were produced at a time when the new Whitlam government was rewriting Australia's foreign policy -- a policy in which Indonesia was to retain its role as 'the linchpin of Southeast Asian security'[4]. Second, some of the general themes and arguments that emerged from the book were given dramatic validity

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1 See for example "Indonesia: emigre post-mortems on the PKI", Australian Outlook, Vol.22, No.3, December 1968, pp.347-359; "Class, Social Cleavage and Indonesian Commission", Indonesia, No.8, October 1969, pp.1-20; "The Downfall of Indonesian Communism", Socialist Register, 1969, pp.189-217; "Culture and Politics in Indonesia", Australian Outlook, Vol.26, No.3, December 1972, pp.326-333; "Values in the Perception of Indonesian Politics", Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs, Vol.7, No.2, July-December 1973, pp.1-7.

2 Mortimer, R., Showcase State. Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1973, p.vii.

3 Ibid., p.xi.

4 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue: I", p.200.

by the 15 January riots in Jakarta the following year. In this regard, they were a powerful indication of one major statement -- the Suharto government's economic stabilization and development policies had done little to relieve the suffering of the masses. They were also indicative of a potentially explosive political setting, fueled by the widening gap between the wealthy and the poor. Third, they formed one joist of a debate that was being slowly erected by dissenting opinion within Australia at the time.

By this time Mortimer, Arndt and Mackie had been joined in the debate by Dr P.J. Eldridge[1] who had written two major papers on Australia-Indonesia relations.[2] Both papers were complex responses to the questions being raised by Mackie and Arndt. In his 'Indonesia and Australia', Eldridge provided a poignant, although imbalanced, analysis of the nature and implications of Australia's historical tendency to 'search for special relationships'. In an era of increasing multilateral diplomacy -- and taking account of Australia's historical efforts to build multilateral institutional links with fellow commonwealth countries and the USA -- he was doubtful about Australia's ability to pursue distinctive bilateral links with Indonesia in the areas of trade, aid, education and culture.[3] Indonesia too had difficulties. However, these were enmeshed in an inability for Indonesia to place 'Australia naturally into domestic political perspective'. Further, Eldridge rather contentiously suggests that this was exacerbated by:

> the unsophistication of the Australian approach, in the context of Indonesia's deep-rooted traditional culture, her complex experience of colonialism, the struggle to achieve national independence and more lately economic development from a situation of extreme and deepening poverty.

Matters that were central to his overall theme were then more

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1 A former schoolmaster from the UK, Eldridge arrived in 1964 to take up a lectureship at the University of Tasmania. He completed his PhD (London School of Economics) in 1967 and subsequently published it; The Politics of Foreign Aid in India, Weidenfield and Nicolson, London, 1969.

2 Eldridge, P.J., "Australian Aid to Indonesia: Diplomacy or Development?", Australian Outlook, Vol.25, No.2, August 1971; "Indonesia and Australia", Australian Neighbours, September-October 1971.

3 Eldridge, P.J., "Indonesia and Australia", p.5.

convincingly canvassed: Indonesia and Australia relations, while superficial, had 'achieved a more concrete level of understanding in the development of economic relations than in the political' arena; cultural relations would prove the most evasive, if for no other reason than for a country to consider this level of contact is 'to consider what level of **shared meanings** might be possible... To bridge the gap requires a high level of **empathy** - a quality for which Australians are perhaps not internationally famous...'.[1] This argument may not have been new -- various academics and journalists had expressed similar views in the context of Australia-Asia relations before -- but Eldridge was edging in a new direction with his contention that 'There is evidence that when talking of cultural relations, Indonesians are a great deal more concerned with human and practical aspects than Australians'.[2]

Eldridge was disturbed by the 'lack of any credible historical dimension in the formulation of official attitudes to Indonesia'. Moreover, relations with Suharto's government seemed to be a reaction to the Sukarno era, and conditioned by the influence of a hangover from the cold war -- not good ingredients for a meaningful relationship with Suharto. Although Eldridge considered Suharto would welcome the uncritical support that marked our role in the partnership since the coup, he warned:

> this uncritical support, if coupled with a substantial incomprehension of Indonesian society and even a hostility, not merely towards certain forces supporting the former president [Sukarno] but also in actual practice towards certain basic characteristics of that society, will in the long-term turn out to be based on false expectations.[3]

Yet, Eldridge did consider it appropriate that we continue participating in Indonesia's social and economic development. In fact, Australia's links with Indonesia in this regard were to dominate much of what Eldridge had written in the 1970s on the relationship.[4] The philosophical underpinnings here are perhaps

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1 Ibid., p.7 (writer's own emphasis).

2 Eldridge, P.J., "Indonesia and Australia", p.8.

3 Ibid., p.9.

4 See for example, Eldridge, P.J., "Australian Aid to Indonesia: Diplomacy or Development?", pp.141-158;

less important than with his concern with 'what combination of resources and techniques can be fitted into what specific locations within the society, economy and administrative apparatus of the recipient country'.[1] In attempting to come to grips with this problem, Eldridge not only weathers some of the major thrusts of Arndt's analyses, but also embraces many of the considerations canvassed by Mackie.

Eldridge, on one level, considered there were a number of factors that were of general significance for Australia's relationship with Indonesia, which needed to be digested and which went beyond the parameters of the Australian aid programme.[2] Like Arndt, he noted that a great proportion of Australia's economic assistance was allocated to commodity and general import credits. Thus, trade promotion was a dominant, self-serving aspect of Australian aid policy.[3] However, on the other level, Eldridge considered that if Australian aid to Indonesia was to be effective, Australia would have to come to terms with the various international influences at work in Indonesia, to understand Indonesia's internal problems, and take a stronger role in solving them.[4] While he does not specifically reflect on how the Indonesians themselves might have reacted to such attempts, Eldridge suggested that:

> it should not prove impossible to set up a variety of small and medium-sized enterprises (in addition to straight forward assistance to health, social services and education) that enable Indonesia to diversify her production, and develop her own technology, skills and

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"Australia's Relations with Indonesia: An Alternative Approach", Australian Outlook, Vol.29, No.1, April 1975, pp.34-52; "Recent Trends and Issues in Australia-Indonesia Relations", Politics, XIII (1), May 1978, pp.42-52; "Aid in the end, is a political process", Current Affairs Bulletin, 1 February 1979, pp.18-30; Indonesia and Australia: the politics of aid and development since 1966, pp.1-203.

1 Eldridge, P.J., "Diplomacy or Development", p.141.

2 Eldridge, P.J., "Diplomacy or Development", p.141 ff.

3 Ibid., p.144 (see also Arndt, H.W., "Australian Economic Aid to Indonesia", pp.130-132).

4 Ibid., p.151 ff, p.157.

capacities to a greater extent.[1]

Eldridge quite correctly considered Australia's aid programme to have been too Australia-centric. Thus, while maintaining due regard for Indonesia's sovereignty, Australia would have to make certain social and economic choices in order to give the aid its proper scope. In the final analysis, this would enable Indonesia to diversify its production, and develop its own technology, skills and capabilities.[2] Moreover, and in an argument that reflected many of the frustrations inherent in Mackie's arguments, Eldridge considered that much of this penetration on Australia's part would depend on an aid program that was development-oriented in its priorities, and on the need to establish direct links with those organizations in Indonesia which were specifically concerned with Australian funded projects.[3]

Eldridge maintained these arguments throughout the 1970s.[4] However, he deviated in 1975 and 1978, with two articles in the academic press which were, in effect, responses to the growing discontent within Australia about Australia's relations with Indonesia,[5] and the East Timor crisis of 1975-77.[6] Of particular concern to Eldridge in the first, was the nature of the Suharto regime and its domestic policies -- a situation which, he argued, should have been disapproved or resisted by Australia. In the second, he focused on the East Timor issue, highlighting the diplomatic tensions caused by, what was now, a clash in political cultures.

Mackie had approached these problems in two major papers which he published in Australian Outlook in 1974.[7] Aware of the doubts

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1 Ibid., p.157.

2 Ibid., p.148-149.

3 Eldridge, P.J., "Diplomacy or Development", p.158.

4 See, in particular, Eldridge, P.J., "Aid, in the end, is a political process", and Indonesia and Australia: The Politics of aid and development since 1966 (1979).

5 Eldridge, P.J., "An Alternative Approach", pp.34-52.

6 Eldridge, P.J., "Recent Trends and Issues", pp.42-52.

7 Mackie, J.A.C., "Principles and Policies: I" (April), pp.3-14, Principles and policies II (August), pp.168-178.

and misgivings that were emerging within Australia at the time, and of calls for the Australian Government to step back from its close association with the 'New Order' Government, Mackie set out to take account of four basic principles he believed should underwrite Australia's relationship with Indonesia.[1] First, 'Australia can no longer afford to pursue policies which entail any substantial risk of seriously antagonizing Indonesia'. Second, Australia should not become 'too closely associated with a particular government or... faction within any Indonesian government'. Third, the 'tendency to think about Australia's relations with Indonesia in purely bilateral terms' should be minimized. Fourth, in formulating long-term policy goals, Australia needed 'to think much more in terms of the political dynamics of the regional international system' and be less preoccupied with security and ''threats from the north' which have dominated so much of our thinking about Indonesia and other Asian countries since 1945'.[2]

Discounting a policy of reducing Australia's foreign aid to Indonesia, to signal 'our moral disapproval and possibly to exact some leverage on the Indonesian Government in the direction of reform', as unrealistic,[3] Mackie proceeded to illustrate other ways in which Australia could exert some influence on the Indonesian Government, one important aspect that had tended to be overlooked by other observers. In what was a fusion between critical understandings of both Australian and Indonesia political processes, within a wider framework of international relations, Mackie sought to find a position between the moral question raised in cutting aid, or at least military aid, and the realpolitik arguments related to Indonesia's historical and contemporary importance to Australia. Underlying this task were the moral and

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1 Mackie, J.A.C., "Principles and Policies: I", p.3. These feelings found expression in: Mortimer, R., Showcase State; articles written in 1973 by former Liberal Minister Don Chipp, and published in the Age (see earlier); and publications, in Australia, by Professor Herb Feith (see earlier) and overseas, by TAPOL, the periodic publication by the British Campaign for the Release of Indonesian Political Prisoners (London), on political prisoners and other forms of political repression.

2 Mackie, J.A.C., "Principles and Policies: II", pp.168-169.

3 Mackie, J.A.C., "Principles and Policies: I", p.4.

political dilemmas posed by a decade and a half of successive Australian Governments and diplomats in Jakarta in:

> building up personal and institutional links with men at the highest levels of the Indonesian government... for as the political base of the regime narrowed, the close association with it of our official representatives has been regarded in some circles in Jakarta, whether rightly or wrongly, as excessively partisan and tantamount to our bestowing full endorsement and support upon the generals, regardless of the policies they are pursuing.[1]

Yet, for Mackie, these links were crucial, and because of the state of political life in Jakarta, this had meant cultivating links with those closest to the centre of power -- the Indonesian military leaders. To cut off military aid would be one step toward cutting off access to, and limiting political influence within, the Indonesian State. As Mackie contended:

> One of the singular features of the political system there is the degree to which power has become so narrowly concentrated at the centre and the operations of government... so highly personalized, opaque and shut off from public scrutiny that it is necessary to have influential connections simply to find out what is going on, quite apart from getting things done.[2]

Nevertheless, Mackie urged Australia to use these links to put 'quiet, persistent pressure on the Indonesian Government to liberalism its policies and broaden its political base'. Further, through personal and institutional links, Mackie contended that there was scope to put pressure for 'a more equitable distribution of the benefits of economic development', and to make representations over 'issues like political detainees, the limitations of press freedom, blatant corruption and the outrageously widening gap between rich and poor'.

Further, and an important observation in view of subsequent writings on Australia-Indonesia relations:

the government should do something to signalise[sic] our

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[1] Mackie, J.A.C., "Principles and Policies: II", p.175.

[2] Ibid., p.177. Mackie expressed this point often to the writer: Canberra, November 1980, Brisbane, September 1983, Canberra, January 1984. It must be said that Mackie also argued that to cut military aid would be a 'small price to pay (and a morally unobjectionable one) if it helps us to obtain significant political leverage that we would otherwise lack'. (Ibid., pp.177-178; these same sentiments were expressed in personal discussions between Mackie and the author).

> uneasiness about the trend of recent events in Indonesia, but this should be done indirectly and at a more fundamental level by elaborating on the underlying rationale of the policies we are pursuing there, which must be couched in terms that are broader and more positive than merely cultivating Indonesia's friendship out of a vague feeling that we must keep on good terms with her.[1]

While Eldridge conceded that Mackie's views at this crucial period in Australia-Indonesia relations provided:

> an important framework within which emerging policy assumptions could be evaluated, ... it can under no circumstances be conceded ... that any one-sided relationship in Indonesia's favour and lacking in mutuality is inevitable or that no significant alternative to current policies can be conceived.[2]

For Eldridge, Australia's Indonesian policy seemed to have been consistent with the guidelines laid down by Mackie -- expressing criticisms of Indonesian affairs 'discreetly and in private' -- however, he asserted that this amounted 'to a fairly paralysing blend of lack of imagination and gutlessness'.[3]

Highly critical of the imbalance between the moral issues at stake here and overpowering joint Australian-Indonesian economic, political and military interests, Eldridge contended that pressure still could be brought to bear on Indonesia through diplomatic, social, cultural, business and professional channels, at both the bilateral and multilateral levels. However, he argued that although Australia and Indonesia would always be involved in a close relationship with each other, this need not always entail common or even compatible interests. Thus, positive steps needed to be taken to ensure an equality in the relationship.

This included reassessing the granting of military aid, and the exchange of intelligence information on one level, while on another, stepping up campaigning for legal rights and scrutinizing a continuing economic assistance programme with a view to a greater redistribution of wealth.[4] In the regional arena Eldridge advocated the strengthening of diplomatic ties with small nations,

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1 Ibid., p.178.

2 Eldridge, P.J., "An Alternative Approach", p.35.

3 Ibid., pp.34-35.

4 Ibid., p.36 ff.

and that 'Indonesian membership of any Southeast Pacific Association should be made conditional on Australian membership of ASEAN or some equally substantial quid pro quo'.[1]

Clearly, Eldridge was now not as constrained as Mackie in stressing the assumption of the importance of access and influence within the Australia-Indonesia relationship. In effect, however, Eldridge, rather naively, considered that Mackie's concern with this loss of influence was a basic weakness to his overall approach to the relationship.[2] Moreover, as Eldridge considered this approach tended, in most important respects, to '...coincide with the general drift of current policy and opinion with the Department of Foreign Affairs',[3] it was also a weakness at these levels, too.

In a rejoiner,[4] Mackie considered that Eldridge's 'alternative approach' reflected a total disregard for Australia's national interests and the objectives of Australian foreign policy in the light of these interests. Further, he challenged Eldridge's policy prescriptions, arguing that they 'would merely create a gratuitously provocative and unnecessary adversary relationship with Indonesia, solely for the sake of demonstrating our higher moral principles, as we see them'. He was scathing in responding to Eldridge's notions of equal footing in ASEAN, strengthening regional ties and cutting military aid, suggesting he was riding 'roughshod over the 'subtleties of Asian politics and culture'', was unrealistic in talking of constructing a cordon sanitaire against Indonesia, and of scrapping 'incidental prospects of our policy like military and intelligence cooperation'.[5]

While there was no disagreement over the facts on which the analyses of Mackie and Eldridge were based, there were divergent interpretations. However, if there was one overriding theme that

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1 Ibid, p. 51.

2 Eldridge, P.J., "An Alternate Approach", p.44.

3 Ibid., p.35.

4 Mackie, J.A.C., "Australia's Relations with Indonesia, A Comment", Australian Outlook, Vol.29, No.1, April 1975, p.109.

5 Ibid.

emerged from the arguments of both academics it was related to the valid observation:

> that internal political developments in Indonesia are not merely of humanitarian or ideological concern from a friendly outside standpoint, but must affect the shape of Indonesia's relations with the region, thus impinging on Australia's interests and very probably her domestic politics.[1]

Fundamental to the writings of both Mackie and Eldridge was the tenable notion that Australia was now compelled to respond to the moral issues at stake, quickly and without stepping back into the preoccupations engendered in our history and without embracing old racist attitudes and slogans related to 'threats from the north'.

Many of these themes also concerned Bruce Grant who took a stance similar to that of Mackie. Between 1965 and 1973, when he became Australia's Ambassador to India, Bruce Grant was a regular commentator in the Age (Melbourne) on Australian defence and foreign policy, as well as a significant contributor to international conferences on international relations issues generally. In the late 1960s, Grant was a significant contributor to attempts to define and delineate Australia's national interests in a number of areas -- in foreign affairs and defence, in trade policy, in considerations of resources development, in policy on foreign investment in Australia and in Australian investment abroad. However, it was to defence and foreign policy, and Australia's relations with Asia, that Grant directed much of his intellectual energy.

Grant's energy found expression during this period in his book Crisis of Loyalty, in which he effectively flayed much of the myth and rhetoric away from past Australian foreign policies, effectively exposing the inadequate way in which they were fashioned.[2] Grant also proceeded to give a general outline of future foreign policy objectives. Against this background, Grant incorporated a significant chapter on Australia's relationship with Indonesia[3] and, instructively, described the Asian nation as

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[1] Eldridge, P.J., "An Alternative Approach", p.52.

[2] Grant, B., Crisis of Loyalty, pp.3-6.

[3] This chapter entitled 'Australia and Indonesia', was presented to the Conference on 'Australia and Indonesia', held at the Australian National University. (Canberra) on

having been a major factor in Australia's international relations since the Second World War in three ways. First, it set a number of tests for Australian foreign policy, which tended to avoid an antagonistic relationship. Second, it gave substance to what has long been called 'the threat from the north'. Third, the Indonesian 'cause' -- 'An effort ... to understand the 'idea' of Indonesia in a way which has not been done by Australia in respect of any other country' -- had captured the minds of scholars, writers and diplomats in Australia in a fashion:

> similar to that exercised on the British imagination by the Arab world in the first half of this century. Although each may be called romantic, the difference is obvious and revealing. While the cause of the Arabs appealed to the military and politically right-wing tendencies in British character, the fate of Indonesia has attracted the pacificist [(feminine?)[1]] and politically left-wing tendencies in Australia character. While the Arab cause was especially interesting to British soldiers, scholars and writers who admire military virtues, the Indonesian cause has been especially interesting to Australian diplomats, and to writers and scholars attracted to the arts of peacemaking.[2]

Within this framework, Grant identified two elements in Australian foreign policy and public attitudes that had given rise to tension in the relationship. Australia has wanted Indonesia to be a successful, stable and prosperous nation, yet has not wanted that country to become dominant in Southeast Asia. Thus, Britain and America were used by Australia to keep her in balance with Indonesia. As Grant correctly affirmed:

> During the two main tests of will - the West Irian dispute and confrontation with Malaysia - the attitudes of these two powers were crucial. Failure to get their support on the first meant a failure for Australian foreign policy; on the second, their support meant success.[3]

By the early 1970s, however, Grant considered events of September

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18-21 May 1970.

[1] The word 'feminine', appearing in the version of the paper Grant gave at the ANU Conference, was deleted in the book, Crisis of Loyalty, p.83.

[2] Grant, B., Crisis of Loyalty, p.83.

[3] Ibid., pp.84 and 89.

1965, the rise of the 'New Order' and the subsequent receding of Australian fears of a dominant Indonesia had paved the way for confident state-to-state relations, and an Australian policy that was directed towards ensuring a prosperous and stable Indonesia. More importantly, however:

> it seems self-evident that a security capacity of any kind for Australia in Southeast Asia is impossible without the assent of Indonesia. This was not needed before ... it was possible to engage in various kinds of commitments without Indonesia's blessing ...[now] the intransigence of geography makes Indonesia's cooperation necessary.[1]

Clearly, Grant was observing an Australia in which the prospect of a complete withdrawal from Southeast Asia on the part of its traditional allies was raising some very fundamental questions. Australia, for the first time, was facing an identity crisis, uncertain of what political and military assets they had in Asia, and whether they had any role to play in Asia at all. As Grant argued in 1970 -- and something of which Indonesia was well aware -- a new policy had to be found, based not on power to contain but on a reciprocal willingness to find a balance in Asia.[2]

Like Grant, Hastings was conscious of these broader strategic concerns and the tension in Australia's budding relationship with Indonesia. A significant contributor to this debate, Hastings, however, focused his analysis upon specific issue areas. His articles in the Australian and later in the Sydney Morning Herald were accurate and incisive expositions of developments within the Indonesian Republic. On a broader scale, Hastings was concerned with issues related to Indonesia's socio-economic and political orientations during the mid-to-late 1960s (see earlier in the press debate). However, it was the foreign policy arena in particular, and specifically, the West Irian issue, which dominated Hastings' intellectual efforts both in the national press and the academic

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[1] Ibid., p.89.

[2] Grant, B., "Australia at the Crossroads", Pacific Community, I (3), April 1970, pp.440-450. See also "Toward a New Balance in Asia. An Australian View", Foreign Affairs, Vol.47 (4), July 1969, pp.711-720, and "Australia's Defence Policy", Quadrant, Vol.14 (1), January/February 1969, pp.37-41.

press.[1]

Writing in the wake of the recently conducted 'Act of Free Choice' in West New Guinea (see Chapter Three), Hastings saw West Irian and Papua New Guinea, each with different political destinies, as not only having an impact on each other but also as having the potential to 'create problems of a special nature in the management of Australia-Indonesia relations'.[2] With West Irian now part of the Indonesian Republic and Papua New Guinea still an Australian colonial dependency, problems were bound to arise, particularly as major changes in the status of Papua New Guinea were envisaged before the mid-1970s. Within this framework, Hastings argued that relations between these two parts of New Guinea would be influenced by three factors. First, by the rapid economic development of Papua New Guinea, and its commensurate rise in affluence. In essence:

> Too great a disparity in economic development rates over a period of increasing literacy and availability of information, is bound to make conditions on one side of the border appear more attractive to people on the other [thus] ... economic development for West Irian is not only desirable in itself but will help drain off tensions which otherwise find overt political expression.[3]

Second, relations could be influenced by the effects in West Irian of Papua New Guinea's independence and, third, by the politics of an independent Papua New Guinea.

The second of these problems, in particular, concerned Hastings, with the elders of West Irian reminded of promises once made to them of an independent future and the younger generation deprived of the fruits of that independence. Thus, Hastings argued for limitations on contact between the Papua New Guineans and

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1 For example see, Hastings, P., "West Irian - 1969: The end of the line...?", New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and Southeast Asia - September/October 1968, pp.12-22; and "West Irian - Papua New Guinea: Problems for Djakarta - Canberra Relations", New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and Southeast Asia - June/July 1970, pp.64-70. The latter paper was presented at the "Australia and Indonesia" Conference held at the ANU (Canberra) on 18-21 May 1971.

2 Hastings, P., "Problems for Djakarta-Canberra Relations", p.64.

3 Hastings, P., "Problems for Djakarta-Canberra Relations", p.67.

Irianese. This would include the discouragement of exchange visits during the period leading up to Papua New Guinea's independence, essentially to prevent unrest among the Irianese who would, in effect, be seeing unrestrained political decision making among fellow Melanesians across the border.[1] Although these were hypothetical scenarios, Hastings contended they would all be marked by a high degree of unpredictability, calling for sensitive and close cooperation between Australia and Indonesia.

5. Conclusions of the Academics

This survey of these more important writings highlights a number of features of the academic interest in, and treatment of, issues arising from the Australia-Indonesia relationship. First, research on the relationship was limited, and it lacked continuity, particularly in the 1960s. This is surprising in view of the interest that developments in Indonesia's domestic and, to a lesser degree, foreign policies were beginning to generate in other arenas, especially the press.

Second, when studies focusing on these developments began to emerge, the work of scholars in the social sciences (political science or related fields) not only paralleled the emergence of radical scholarship that questioned conservative thinking on the nature of development in the Third World, but saw this research concentrate increasingly on Indonesia as a major case in point. This inevitably led to a questioning of considerations -- whether diplomatic, commercial or humanitarian -- underwriting Australia's Indonesia policies, not least those which related to economic assistance. Nevertheless, the few economists like Arndt who contributed to the wider debate accepted the framework and substance of such policies.

Arnst was, as an economist, primarily concerned with the economic effect of aid in the recipient country; in more instances than most, this was Indonesia. Within this context he was a strong advocate of the importance, essentially to the donor country, of building links between this aid and the export of goods, and with overseas investment. Arndt was never, in fact, one to deny his

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[1] Ibid.

strong belief in this doctrine.[1] The point that stands out in all of Arndt's writings was the fact that in relation to the role of aid generally in the alleviation of poverty and economic development, he held firmly to the view that in terms of overcoming poverty the first task was the attainment of optimum economic growth; only when this had been done could any substantial, structural attacks on poverty be begun. Arndt was also a strong believer in the ability of 'the market', unfettered by government interference, to deliver the maximum benefit to the maximum number of people.

However, more importantly, Arndt had not only carved out an intellectual niche for himself and his ideas in the academic arena, but also in government[2] and business circles[3] and among non-government organizations.[4] While it is difficult to assess the effect his evaluations in these areas had in other than broad terms, it can be argued that his doctrines did little to throw light on the social and political implications of aid in general and specifically on Australia's aid to Indonesia. Eldridge, on the other hand, focused specifically on these implications, as did Mortimer, Feith[5] and Mackie. While the former began to effectively examine the official rationale behind Australia's aid in general,

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1 Arndt, H.W., 'Australian Foreign Aid Policy', 31st Joseph Fisher Memorial Lecture, 1964, in H.W. Arndt, (ed.), A Small Rich Industrial Country; and "Australian Economic Aid to Indonesia", p.132 ff. See especially p.139 where he saw distinct advantages arising from the Tjilatjap industrial estate project, calling it a "marriage of official aid and private investment".

2 See for example, "Aid and the Official Conscience", Australian Quarterly, Vol.41, No.4, December 1969, pp.43-48.

3 "The Indonesian Economy: Problems and Opportunities for Australia", in H.W. Arndt, (ed.), A Small Rich Industrial Country, pp.218-227. (The Chartered Secretaries Research Lecture (1968)).

4 Arndt attended ACFOA seminars in the late 1960s and early 1970s. See for example, Minogue, N., "Report of Seminar Organized by Australian Council for Overseas Aid in August 1970", Mimeo., 22 September 1970.

5 See for example Feith's paper, "Growth and Development in Asia: Some Criticisms of Conventional Approaches", ACFOA Research and Information Service, No.3/73, Canberra, 1973.

his call for greater Australian involvement tended to underestimate the difficulties of access and influence stressed by Mackie.

Mortimer's analysis was more brutal. He not only rejected the W.W. Rostow school of thought on development, but also Australia's, and in particular Arndt's, role in that process. While he conceded he was aware of the achievements made in economic growth in Indonesia in the early 1970s, Mortimer was more concerned with what he considered was of far more importance: the way that growth was being achieved, and its social and political legacies. This enabled Mortimer to reject not only the official assumptions underwriting Australia's aid policy but one of its strongest adherents, H.W. Arndt who, Mortimer asserted, typified:

> the vices of developmentalism in a fairly extreme form. He is strongly technocratic in orientation, a wholehearted believer in the virtues of growth, and closely identified with the policies of his own government and of those Southeast Asian regimes which operate according to the economic principles he favours....[1]

While it would seem that Mackie trod a fine line between these extreme positions he was fully aware of their underlying premises. What concerned him, however, was what he considered to be the gratuitous and moralizing stance inherent in this dissenting opinion within Australia on Indonesian issues.[2] Predominantly concerned, within an international relations context, with broader questions of national interest, Mackie placed great emphasis on the importance of access and influence in the successful conduct of the Australia-Indonesia relationship. While this view paralleled official views in Canberra, Mackie advocated the use of such links to subtlely place pressure on the Indonesian Government to liberalise its policies in the face of criticism that emanated not only from within Australia but also the international arena. This argument makes a great deal of sense, and would have a greater chance of success in bridging the political and socio-cultural barriers between the two countries than any grandstanding gesture, including the reduction, if not cessation, of economic and military

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[1] Mortimer, R., "Liberal Impasse in Australian Scholarship", p.177.

[2] This observation emerged often in the many personal discussions the writer had with Professor Mackie throughout the 1980s.

aid.

Two aspects of the academic community's role in the national debate had particular significance. First, while the strong ideological orientation of the discussion was responsible for a widening division within this small grouping, it did provide the theoretical framework in which Australia's Indonesia policies were increasingly discussed in other forums, including the press and Parliament, as noted in the preceding Chapters. Second, while the writings of these scholars were attempts to raise the level of public awareness of the issues involved, there is no evidence to suggest that the timing or substance of government policy was affected by their actions as a 'group'. However, individuals within the 'group' (notably Arndt and Mackie) might well have influenced policy, because of their contacts and status, and the kinds of policies they espoused.

Non-government Lobby Groups[1]

The second category of opinions and attitudes of relevance here came from those groups which were assembled for purposes other than those that centred on issues related to Indonesia, or to Australia's relations with that country. However, as with the unorganized individuals that could also make up this category,[2] a partial identity was shared due to their occasional interest in these broad Indonesian matters. The purpose here is only to identify these groups and individuals, rather than provide an exhaustive analysis of their emergence and interests. In doing so, it is with a view to, first, characterizing their perceptions of Indonesia, together with their major premises regarding Australia's position in regional affairs. Second, this will provide a backdrop to an examination of this same category of opinions and attitudes during the 1975-80 period.

There are two major groups in this category -- non-government aid

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[1] Groups whose interests in Indonesian issues and Australia-Indonesia relations were peripheral to their major activities.

[2] It was decided not to extend the study to this disparate group as it was considered, on an examination of selected writings and commentaries, that it would have had only a minimal impact on the domestic debate or on policy.

agencies and Non Government Organizations (NGOs)[1], which includes the churches, the trade union movement, and the Returned Services League (RSL). Each group had a varying degree of interest in Indonesian matters during the 1950s through to the mid-1960s,[2] and this study examines whether or not, in the changed circumstances of post-coup Indonesia, these interests were sustained.

1. Non Government Aid Agencies

Since the 1960s, the number of groups in Australia that have taken an interest in overseas aid has risen dramatically. Of the groups established, over thirty were to become members of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA),[3] including the main church-based aid groups, major non-church agencies and a number of professional and community groups. Their activities varied, with non-church groups mainly involved in raising funds and delivering programmes of aid. While the professional organizations maintained a specialized interest in aid, the community groups had an ancillary, although serious, commitment to aid.

In domestic terms, the importance of the ACFOA membership lay in its representation, by the early 1970s, of significant sections of the Australian community, both in numbers and in terms of

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1 The roles of NGOs and aid agencies are examined in Eldridge, P.J., Indonesia and Australia, pp.121-155. The NGOs can vary in size and structure: groups may be small and set up to assist a specific project that has mobilized interest at the community level, for example the resettlement of refugees. Other groups or agencies are set up with the specific purpose of raising funds from the community and delivering aid to Third World communities. Still other groups concentrate their resources on raising awareness within the Australian community of Third World problems. Some organizations fall into one of two categories -- relief or development agencies. While the former attempt to be politically neutral and concentrate their response on meeting the requirements of victims of natural or man-made disasters, the latter direct their attention to long-term projects such as medical and education programmes, and agricultural schemes, and unlike the relief agencies, find it difficult to avoid political involvement. Yet, many agencies acknowledge the important role the political process has in development and accept the implications.

2 Viviani examines their respective roles during this period in her PhD thesis, "Australian Attitudes and Policies towards Indonesia", pp.120-129.

3 Eldridge, P.J., Indonesia and Australia, p.121.

influence on official policy. Through their field officers and counterpart organizations, ACFOA members were able to cast a wide net in their search for information on the mounting problems facing Third World countries. This process provided a framework of knowledge upon which discussion and deliberation within the NGO system was based. It also provided a basis for subsequent representation to government.[1]

Thus, the importance of these groups, whether in ACFOA or not, can be overstated, particularly as they developed views and attempted to mobilize government interest in relation to Indonesian issues. As Eldridge observed, they:

> provide[d] an alternative focus on development issues to that offered by government and business leaders ... present[ing] their ideas in a simple and popular form to fairly influential sections of Australian public opinion. Through contacts with the politicians, academics, trade unionists, student, church and other groups they have contributed towards forming an articulate minority of often dissenting opinion on policy towards Indonesia.[2]

In more general terms, one of their major concerns has been to transmit issues raised by the Third World back to the Australian Government and public. This process paralleled the growing economic and political power of this bloc of countries and its main aim has been to mobilize the political will in countries like Australia to support a more just international distribution of resources. However, this concern with justice and poverty was often matched by concerns over questions on human rights. And it was human rights issues, such as those that were engendered in the East Timor issue, which were to place a strain on this aid agency-government-public opinion nexus.[3]

The interest of aid agencies in the colony of East Timor was

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1 Personal interview with Foreign Affairs official.

2 Eldridge, P.J., Indonesia and Australia, p.121.

3 Australian aid agencies were strong and unequivocal in their early opposition to Indonesia's actions in East Timor. A close examination of public opinion polls and the annual debate of ACFOA -- whose major members at the time included Community Aid Abroad (CAA), Australian Volunteers Abroad (AVA), Action for World Development (AWD), World Vision and the Australian Council of Churches (ACC) -- in the period following the invasion provides evidence that on such an issue the aid agencies reflected a very widespread public view (this is examined in Chapter Ten).

first aroused through the original and broader issue of Portuguese colonialism. In the early 1970s, in conjunction with the World Council of Churches (WCC), student[1] and church groups supported UN resolutions calling on the Portuguese administration to allow self-determination for all of its colonies. By the time the new Whitlam government had come to power, this interest had gained momentum, stirred by a complaint in the Australian Financial Review[2] that two major Australian Companies -- BHP and TAA -- had been actively involved in dealings with the Portuguese colony, and it seemed likely that they had broken the UN resolutions, at that time supported by the Whitlam government. Within days, Action for World Development (AWD), with a handful of other ACFOA members, had called for the severing of all economic links with East Timor. They were soon joined in their protests by a number of Catholic Bishops who announced a subsequent tour of Australia by a Portuguese delegation, which was in Australia to promote trade.

At the same time, another issue was taking an increasing grip on the agencies, and this related to an examination of, on one level, the role and activities of development aid in Third World countries and, on another, the development strategy being pursued by the Suharto government in Indonesia. The former caused some members within ACFOA to view their activities as needing to effect a balance between informing public opinion within Australia about some of the fundamental questions concerning development issues and their work in the field. The latter gave rise to a level of debate that not only embraced the dissenting views of Mortimer and Feith, but also broadened to focus on human rights, embroiling political parties, churches, the Australian press and the trade union movement.

These seeds for support were fertilized within months of the

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1 In 1968, the then National Union of Australian University Students commissioned and published a report by John Diment, a Sydney postgraduate student who had spent some time on the island. He considered the resolutions adopted by the UNGA at the end of 1966 were not without justifications: the resolutionS reaffirmed the right to self-determination for the peoples of Portuguese colonies, condemned Portuguese Government economic and political exploitation and violations against these people and called on other states to give them 'the moral and material support' they needed to overcome Portuguese domination. See Diment, J., "Timor - Oppressive Anachronism", National U, 22 July 1968, p.7.

2 Australian Financial Review, 15 May 1973.

emergence of the three political parties in East Timor in 1974. Ramos Horta established early links with Action for World Development in particular. Whitlam's meeting with Suharto in September, and his subsequent statement that they agreed that an independent East Timor was 'unviable', galvanized many aid agencies into activity. They then embarked on a campaign which promoted the East Timor cause for self-determination. The civil war in East Timor in August gave rise to concern within ACFOA, in particular, for the safety of the East Timorese people and it was soon, 'together with the Campaign for an Independent East Timor (CIET) and the Australia-East Timor Association[,]... at the centre of pressure on the Australian Government over the Timor issue'.[1]

While ACFOA found strength in broad support for its campaign from the Australian churches, divisions were to arise within this element of emerging opinion on East Timor.

NGOs

. Churches[2]

The Australian Council of Churches (ACC) had formed strong ties with the Indonesia Council of Churches following the founding of the latter organization in 1950. While the aims of this liaison were a concern for:

> unity, service and mission ... it has been probably in the area of unity that the Council has produced the least creative results and the least creative thinking ... Too much discussion has been among confessional groups in the West while the main problem in realizing unity of the Church in Indonesia is how to unite the various 'folk-churches' with their different cultural, linguistic, and to some extent confessional backgrounds at a time when the various ethnic groups in Indonesia are together involved in the process of nation building and modernization.[3]

While the response of the churches, through their statements and through direct mediation, always stressed their 'ministry of

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1 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue: II", p.249.

2 The author is grateful to the Archbishop of Brisbane (Sir John Grindrod), Rev. W. Stratford of the Queensland Ecumenical Council of Churches, and Ms J. Skuse of the ACC (Sydney) for their assistance in gathering information and documents relating to the ACC's activities.

3 ACC, "Indonesia", pamphlet produced by the Division of World Christian Action (ACC), NSW, 1972, pp.4-5.

reconciliation, appealing for mutual forgiveness, mutual respect and cooperation with regard to the future development of Indonesia', this nexus between culture and the processes of modernization were to be of major concern to the churches throughout the 1970s. This was paralleled however by an increasing awareness that:

> Indonesians are somewhat disillusioned and disappointed because the problem of development and modernization has not resolved itself very fast.

Within this climate of feeling and thinking on the part of the church was 'a growing sense of urgency' that resolution be reached quickly, coupled with a desire that the church be 'politically relevant... to cope with the hopes and aspirations of the people in a positive, critical, creative and realistic way'.

Thus, the problems for the churches in relation to Indonesia were considered to be set in how they could:

> be integrated into the emerging modern Indonesian culture and at the same time how to penetrate the value system and the political, social and economic structures with insights based on the Christian faith, but acceptable to all because of their intrinsic truth.[1]

This Christian faith, however, was to be put to the test as issues related to human rights, in particular Indonesia's political prisoners, became a most acute problem. This was exacerbated by debate, within the churches, related to Australia's defence aid to Indonesia after 1972. By 1974, the churches had expressed concern over these two growing issues, through written papers[2] and the signing of petitions.

. Trade Unions

Although individual trade unions were signatories to such petitions, the Australian Trade Union movement showed little public concern with the course of Australia-Indonesia relations, or with Indonesian issues in the period from 1966 to 1975.[3] While domestic

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[1] Ibid., pp.5-6.

[2] For example, see Anonymous, "Australia's Defence Aid to Indonesia" in Ibid., pp.1-4 (separate section).

[3] Specifically, this refers to the Australian Council of Trade Unions, as reflected in its bi-annual Congress Agenda, Decisions and Minutes, 1965-75. An examination of the incomplete records of the ACFU (including The ACTU Bulletin), held in the University of Queensland (Fryer

issues dominated the agenda at each ACTU Congress, particularly economic and industrial matters, debate and resolutions in the area of international affairs, were dominated by the Vietnam war, conscription and compulsory military training, nuclear testing, South Africa and peace.[1]

While Indonesian issues were not raised by any trade union on the agenda of any congress in the late 1960s up until 1977,[2] there was a strong feeling of fellow-feeling for their Asian counterparts in the area of working conditions and standards of living. In 1973, the ACTU Congress recognized the need to provide a solution to the problems facing workers in the Southeast Asian area and recommended support be given to the Voluntary Aid Agencies, and requests to the Federal Government for a dollar for dollar grant. Moreover, it resolved to raise funds to go towards the strengthening of trade union organizations in Southeast Asia, and called on the Australian Government to identify and quantify aid projects in developing countries which could receive Australian Trade Union Movement assistance, through local organizations, in these areas.[3]

While the unions (especially the waterside unions) had been at the forefront of the movement in the 1940s to have the Australian Chifley Government support the Indonesian nationalist movement during the revolution,[4] from this sketch, it seems clear that as a bloc of public opinion, the Australian Trade Union Movement during this period was more concerned with domestic issues, and the status of the workers (in Australia and abroad). There were, however, individual unions willing to put their weight behind criticism on some Indonesia issues. In 1965-66, the Seaman's Union spoke out

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Library) and the Trades Hall (South Brisbane), revealed no mention of these issues.

1 Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), "Consolidation of ACTU Policy Decisions, 1951-80", Document No. D46-80, (Industrial Printing and Publicity Co. Ltd., 1980), pp.3-4.

2 The ACTU Executive took decision on East Timor in November 1975, and February 1976. See ACTU, Executive Report (for consideration by The Australian Congress of Trade Unions, 1977), pp.6-7.

3 ACTU, Decisions, September 1973, pp.16-17.

4 George, M., Australia and the Indonesian Revolution, pp.36-37.

against the events taking place in Indonesia in the wake of the coup, while the issue of political prisoners in 1974 attracted support from the left and the right of the union movement. Nevertheless, no single union was to put a resolution on any of these issues at any intervening annual congress.

. Returned Services League (RSL)

The final group examined here is the RSL. Originally established to protect the interests of Australian ex-servicemen and women, the organization established itself in the Australian community, and became an important and influential pressure group in the 1950s and 1960s under conservative governments. It became deeply enmeshed in national politics during this period on a wave of strong nationalism and bitter anti-communism, both at home and abroad, and became a strong campaigner on foreign and defence policy matters.[1] In view of this rise to prominence, Teichmann considered:

> the RSL's ready access to the inner councils of conservative governments, their close links with serving officers for whom they acted as an indispensable lobby, their monopolistic control of patriotic economies[sic] and their pre-emptive assertion of special links with the Monarchy and the Established Churches all conspired to make them a pressure group and veto group to be reckoned with in any decisions or dialogues concerning their averred interest. The press treated them at all times with utter deference.[2]

Indonesian issues were often viewed within the context of a strong anti-communism. This was particularly evident from recommendations arising from the 50th National Congress in October 1965 and published in the RSL's Vigilance in early 1967.[3] Australia had only recently committed forces in Vietnam, and it had the wholehearted support of the RSL. The enemy was 'North Vietnam acting with the support and encouragement of Red China'. In the eyes of the RSL, there was abundant evidence of China's plan to 'liberate' the

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1 Millar, T.B., Peace and War, p.47. See also RSL Annual Report, 1965-80 passim.

2 Teichmann, M., "International Relations" in D.M. Gibb, and A.W. Hannan, (eds.), Debate and Decision: Political Issues in 20th Century Australia. Heinmann, Melbourne, 1975, p.191.

3 Anonymous, "The League and National Defence", Vigilance, Vol.3, December/January 1967, pp.29-31.

countries of Southeast Asia: communist subversion was to be found in Thailand, in the border areas of Malaya and in Laos. While it considered Burma and Cambodia were well within the Communist sphere, the RSL considered Indonesia was a shining example of a country where China's 'methods have been exposed and condemned by the Indonesians themselves following the abortive 30 September coup'.

In the overall scheme of things, the RSL saw that 'the activities of Red China are not unlike those of Hitler in Europe prior to the Second World War', and found solace in history where, 'in dealing with dictators [Mao Tse-tung,] the worst course is one of appeasement'.[1] In Australian domestic terms it saw the growing reaction to Australia's Vietnam policy as 'misguided', placing the blame for such a situation squarely on the shoulders of the government which had failed to undertake a 'thorough and imaginative campaign... to place before the Australian public all the facts and all the implications of the war in Vietnam'.[2]

RSL criticism of this failure, on the part of the Australian Government, also extended to its plans in relation to Papua and New Guinea. The RSL saw the eastern part of the island as 'a vital element in the front line of Australia's defence system' and called for a build-up of strength in indigenous forces. It also advocated the establishment of a comprehensive system of defence bases to permit the stationing of regular units of Australia's armed forces. Of particular concern here was that the border be secure and all necessary precautions be taken to prevent 'any form of infiltration'.

Herein lay the dilemma for the RSL. While it considered it reasonable to assume that Indonesia's drift to left had been arrested, and held hopes of better relations in the wake of the coup and the strengthening of the military:

> we have been abundantly aware of the unstable nature of the Indonesian administration. It places us in a position where, while we work constantly for improved relations, we must take all those steps that are necessary to provide adequate defence should any further change occur in the Indonesian political situation. In no area is this more necessary than in the border region

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1 Ibid., p.29.

2 Ibid., p.30.

of New Guinea - West Irian.[1]

These themes -- communism, the new government in Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea -- were to re-emerge constantly over the next five years.[2] Early concerns with Indonesia's massive economic and social problems were balanced by those related to a resurgence of communist influence, and the RSL counselled the Indonesian military to be 'extremely vigilant'.[3] This situation became more acute upon notice of the British intention to withdraw from the area of East of Suez by the 1970s. The RSL was faced with three dilemmas: how what they saw as the resulting power vacuum was to be filled; how to ensure that Australia -- now carrying (along with New Zealand) the greater part of the burden of maintaining stability in the region -- would be accepted by our regional neighbours in taking on 'the role that history has allotted us... in undertaking an international responsibility'; and how to batten down the strategic defence of the region, utilizing traditional allies such as Malaysia and Singapore, while finding ways to embrace Indonesia. While it was now considered vital that Australia:

> do everything [it] can to ensure the increasing goodwill of this great and potentially very powerful nation and to keep ourselves closely informed on political and military developments in that country,

there was still an underlying concern about the 'sizeable degree of instability [that] continues to exist'.[4] These dilemmas were to occupy the RSL for some years, and took on a greater sense of urgency when it became clear that the USA was to wind down their military activities in Southeast Asia. It elevated the importance which social and economic development in Southeast Asia would play in eroding Communism, depicted an Australian movement towards isolationism -- or 'Fortress Australia' -- as 'an amoral concept'[5] and, at best, 'a misnomer'.[6] In this context, Indonesia was

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1 Anonymous, "The League and National Defence", Vigilance, Vol.3, p.31.

2 RSL, Annual Reports, 1966-70 passim.

3 RSL, 51st Annual Report, 1966, p.21.

4 RSL, 52nd Annual Report, 1967, p.16.

5 RSL, 53rd Annual Report, 1968, p.19.

6 RSL, 54th Annual Report, 1969, p.17.

becoming of greater importance and in need of assistance in its economic and social rehabilitation.[1] By 1969, following President Nixon's expression of confidence in the Suharto government and its future role in regional stability, the RSL's national executive considered in its 1970 defence submission to the government that Australia:

> should, by every possible means, through economic aid, trade, business interest and investment, and cultural relations, seek to build on the good relations that at present exist between our two countries.[2]

The RSL, as did Nixon in relation to his own country's relationship with Indonesia, increasingly saw cooperation as the key to these relations, and this sentiment was echoed in its subsequent views on West Irian, the border situation and Papua New Guinea. Gone was the concern with Indonesia as a threat on the border, and discussion into the 1970s on Indonesian issues as they related to that part of the region was couched in terms which were highly sympathetic to Indonesia.[3]

Meanwhile, the RSL national executive continued to consider Communism as the major threat to Australia and the region, with the PKI,[4] and the Soviet presence in and interest in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean generating debate.[5] While it decreasingly saw Communism as monolithic, the RSL considered that 'Chinese - Russian conflicting aspirations may cause each to use its military strength to increase its political influence' in the region.[6] And the RSL executive in 1974 found no comfort in the new Whitlam government's optimistic assessments as they related to Australia's strategic situation, citing Sino-Soviet antagonisms, great power rivalies in the Indian Ocean, the Middle-East problems and the increasing

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1 RSL, 53rd Annual Report, 1968, pp.17-18. See also Ibid., p.19.

2 RSL, 54th Annual Report, 1969, p.19.

3 See RSL, Annual Report, 1969-1974, passim.

4 See RSL, 54th Annual Report, 1969, pp.18-19.

5 RSL, Annual Report, 1970, pp.18-19, 1971, pp.16-17, 1972, p.17. See also Anonymous, "1972 RSL Defence Paper", On Guard, Vol.11, December 1972, pp.4-5.

6 RSL, 57th Annual Report, 1972, p.17.

regional role of Japan in economic and political terms.[1]

Following the 60th National Congress in October 1975 the RSL saw peace and stability under threat in terms similar to those used a decade before:

> The collapse of South Vietnam and Cambodia and the virtual takeover by the communists in Laos will greatly encourage communist insurgents in neighbouring Asian countries. Already, terrorist [sic] campaigns on the Thai and Malaysian border areas have greatly intensified. China, Russia and Vietnam are committed to supporting wars of 'national liberation', in Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia....[2]

There was a distinct convergence between the RSL's characteristic emphasis on strategic and defence matters, and its firming view, through the late 1960s and early 1970s, of Indonesia's role in a region that was clearly undergoing substantial changes. Within this context two developments were taking place. First, the RSL's strongly held ideological views continued unchanged, coinciding with the rise and consolidation of Indonesia's right-wing 'New Order'. Second, this gave rise to a partial erosion of the ethnocentrism that marked the attitudes of RSL leaders during the 1950s and early 1960s.[3] In essence, the paternalism remained, while the dislike of Asians seemed to be receding, simply because it served Australia's interests to have, economically and politically, a strong Asian State -- namely Indonesia -- to be, in the wake of the British and American decisions to withdraw, the new vanguard in the RSL's continuing fight against communism. This judgement strengthened into the 1970s, rather than weakened, as revelations concerning the 'New Order's' domestic role came under the critical scrutiny of many groups and individuals within Australia.

While the RSL was a pressure group or an opinion leader on matters relating to strategic and defence matters, it is difficult

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1 RSL, 59th Annual Report, 1974, p. 12. See also C.J. Hines' Speech, "Australia sits on time bomb" in Reveille, Vol.47, 15 August 1973, pp. 5,8 and 10. (Hines was the President of the NSW, RSL).

2 RSL, 60th Annual Report, 1975, p. 19. See also Ibid., 1976, p.21, and Hines, C.J., "Time to Wake Up", Reveille, Vol.51, June 1976, p.1.

3 Viviani reached this conclusion after examining RSL attitudes to Indonesia before the coup in 1965. See Viviani, N.,"Australian Attitudes and Policies", p.127.

to assess their influence on matters related to Indonesia. However, it could be generalized that as the 'New Order' gained in strength in domestic and international terms, it came to be seen increasingly by RSL leaders to be, as never before, a welcome part of the Western bloc. Moreover, such views would have reached those policy-makers who were constructing and conducting Australia's foreign and defence policies.

. Collective influence of Non Government Lobby Groups

The effect that organised groups have on foreign policy remains problematical. While in principle the opportunity for influence is there, the closed nature of the decision-making process, the strength of the institutional interests concerned and the lack of resources for many of the more radical groups to sustain any pressure are factors that contribute to limiting their impact. Within this disparate group of organizations, the aid agencies emerge as the most dominant group but its contribution provided more context than influence in policy terms -- it has been easier to discover what these groups are than what their effect or influence has been on particular policies.

While none of these groups seemed to have had an important impact on Australia's Indonesia policy during the period under review, the aid agencies in particular became a pivotal point for wider-ranging dissenting political activity. Such activity, however, was mainly centred on development issues but, as within the academic community, Indonesia came increasingly under scrutiny in the efforts of non-government lobby groups to widen understanding of, and establish contact to influence, the government's aid policy.

Notwithstanding this, there is no documentary evidence of the impact of non-government lobby group activity on public opinion or to suggest that the alliances -- especially between the aid agencies and the churches -- gave rise to any concrete strategy to specifically address Australia's Indonesia policy. Moreover, the strong ideological sentiments inherent in many of the arguments presented on aid and, by implication, Indonesian issues, mitigated such links being formed with the RSL which, like the AIBCC, had views that coincided strongly with those of the government.

Conclusion

Non-government lobby group and community opinions throughout

this period reflected only sporadic interest in Indonesian issues. The interesting feature of community opinion was the way a negative preoccupation with Australia's security interests was juxtaposed with a concern for the stability and welfare of the Indonesian nation. This altruism dissipated towards the end of the 1960s but such a development was related more to a widening skepticism about the way which aid policy was being administered generally and growing doubts about whether aid was reaching the appropriate destination. However, neither view could be regarded as having guided the Australian Government in its framing of Indonesian policy, in either the security or foreign aid arenas.

Such issues were of importance to an increasing number of groups and individuals. The most powerful, although perhaps not the most vocal group, was the business community which had appropriate links with the conservative government. Unlike those groups and individuals who adopted an increasingly dissenting position on Indonesian issues and Australia's relationship with Indonesia, this group -- as with public opinion generally -- followed the lead of successive conservative governments throughout this period. While dissenting opinion emerged, positions adopted over this period by groups like the non-government lobby groups and individuals like Eldridge and Mortimer lay in isolation, failing to attract broad public support.

PART THREE

POLICY UNDER SIEGE: AUSTRALIAN POLICIES AND ATTITUDES DURING THE TIMOR DISPUTE (1974 - 1980)

By the mid-1970s, global society at large had changed remarkably, and in ways of vital importance to Australia's international relations. However, as suggested in Chapter 3, while there was a growing realization in the late 1960s and early 1970s of the inadequacy of its traditional approach to the outside world, Australia's foreign and defence policies under the L-CP government were overtaken by events. The acceleration of Britain's economically-motivated military withdrawal from the Asia-Pacific region coincided with the American recognition of the failure of its Indo-China policies, the Nixon Doctrine, a withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam and the abandonment of its traditional approach to China. America's Cold War policies of containment, non-recognition and economic boycott gave way to rapprochement and detente, lessening tensions not only between the USA and China, but also between the Americans and the Soviet Union.

Thus, the old barriers were breaking down. On one level, Nixon and his National Security Adviser, Dr. Kissinger, both visited China, while unprecedented negotiations with the USSR focused on joint space ventures, trade agreements, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), and a treaty for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. On another level, by December 1972, and the election of the Whitlam Labor government, the Third World countries were exerting considerable pressures on the major powers, particularly in the United Nations, to introduce more social and economic equity into the international community.

The L-CP government in the late 1960s and early 1970s, therefore, had been conducting foreign and defence policy in a period of immense activity and change. That there was a conflict between its foreign policy and the changing world situation was well documented in Australia's policies and attitudes towards China. This was one area where Australia was torn between past assumptions and policies, and the need to adapt to world changes. But there were also other problems in continuing to adhere to past

assumptions while, at the same time, trying to adjust to a new global situation. This could not have been more evident than in Freeth's Soviet policy.

Moreover, the eventual commencement of a withdrawal of Australian troops from Vietnam represented a significant change in defence policy thinking. Without a large allied military presence in Southeast Asia, it was no longer credible for the Australian Government to operate in terms of the traditional strategic policy of Forward Defence -- one of the major pillars of the foreign and defence policies of successive L-CP governments. While Australia was entering a new era in world politics, the political response was varied. Reassessments by conservative leaders were hamstrung by past beliefs and assumptions and by electoral pressures at home.[1] Even moderate change was difficult. Inevitably the coalition parties were both slow and hesitant to deviate from long-standing foreign and defence policies.[2] Labor leaders, unlike the L-CP governments, welcomed the changes in the international environment, and did not view them with alarm or anxiety.

Writing in 1972, having led the Labor Opposition since its shattering defeat in the 1966 election, Whitlam asserted 'We are entering a period of unparalleled complexity in international relations', and vowed a new start in foreign policy under a Labor government, because 'the slogans and shibboleths of the past, the self-deceiving moralizing of the cold war, can no longer pass as

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1 Refer, for example, to Fraser's statements of 10 March 1970, and April 1971 (CPD, H.R., Vol.72, 22 April 1971, p.1929); See also statements by Bowen when he was Foreign Minister (Ibid., Vol.75, 9 November 1971, p.3154); and Fairbairn, Minister for Defence (Ibid., Vol.77, 28 March 1972, p.1250). Also, refer to DLP views in its publication Focus, for example, 'The US Alliance', Focus, Vol.6, May 1973, pp.6-8; and 'The Singapore Debate', Ibid., pp.10-11 and 13-14.

2 Murphy, D.J., 'New Nationalism or New Internationalism, Australian Foreign Policy 1973-74', World Review, Vol.13, No.3, October 1973, pp.15-17. Professor J.D.B. Miller considers before it lost office, the L-CP had begun to re-examine assumptions and make new assessments about Australia's international relationship. Miller, J.D.B., "Australian Foreign Policy: Constraints and Opportunities - II", International Affairs, Vol.50, July 1974, p.426. See also Miller, J.D.B., "Australian Foreign Policy: Constraints and Opportunities - I", International Affairs, Vol.50, April 1974, pp.232-233.

policy'.[1] Accordingly, the incoming Labor government set out to modernize and adapt foreign policy to current realities and took a large number of initiatives very early in its term of office.[2] Shaped and driven by Whitlam as both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, these policies reflected a Labor leader who:

> was determined to place Australia on the map to an extent not achieved since Herbert V. Evatt's time (1941-49); to make its own voice heard and respected in Asia, Africa and Latin America no less than in the Old World; in the Communist States no less than in the United States ... he believed that Australia in its conservatism and in deference to allies had passed by on the other side of the great human problems and movements of our time, and he was determined to change all that ... He saw the need for new policies, in their own right, and quickly set about implementing them.[3]

However, while Whitlam aimed to break from the conceptual and ideological constraints of the preceding years, stressing the need for a more independent stance in foreign policy -- less militaristic and open less to suggestions of racism,[4] by late 1974, 'it became abundantly clear that very few of these intentions were likely to be translated into political reality in the foreseeable future'.[5]

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1 Gough Whitlam, 'Australia and Her Region', in John McLaren, (ed.), Towards a New Australia, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1972, p.2.

2 The tone of Australia's new 'independent' approach to foreign policy was set from the outset. The government quickly entered into diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, (and later) North Vietnam, the German Democratic Republic and North Korea; had withdrawn Australia's military from Vietnam and its aid to Cambodia; removed Australia's infantry from Singapore; stopped wheat sales to Rhodesia; provided some indirect aid to South African liberation movements; hastened independence for Papua New Guinea; demonstrated systematic sympathy and support for Third World aspirations in the UN and elsewhere; formally opposed France's nuclear tests in the South Pacific; supported proposals for the creation of a zone of peace and neutrality in the Indian Ocean and the South East Asian region; and began negotiations with Japan for a treaty of friendship and cooperation.

3 Millar, T.B., 'From Whitlam to Fraser', Foreign Affairs, July, 1977, pp. 856-857.

4 See Whitlam's Review of Foreign Policy Statement, CPD, H.R., Vol.84, 24 May 1973, esp. p.2643.

5 Camilleri, J.A., An Introduction to Australian Foreign Policy, 2nd ed., Brisbane, Jacaranda Press, 1975, p.81.

Even though there had been a substantial reorientation of policies under the Labor government during this period, it was not as far-reaching as comment of the time suggested, reflecting more 'an adaptive reaction to new trends in international politics rather than ... a conscious and coherent attempt to question or revise the foundations of Australia's diplomatic conduct'.[1] While Whitlam's desire to stimulate reform in Australian perceptions and interpretations of international society[2] was significant, he continued to embrace the basic foundations of Australian foreign policy and maintained that little had changed in its friendships, alliances and in its national interests.[3]

Indeed, foreign policy commentators have tended more to stress the elements of continuity in Whitlam's foreign policy than to emphasize those of change. Albinski, for example, believed that despite 'some new definitions, disections and methods', despite 'real shifts of emphasis in both substance and style' and notwithstanding 'boasts of great achievement', continuity was

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1 Camilleri, J., "Foreign Policy", in Patience A. and Head B., (eds.), From Whitlam to Fraser: reform and reaction in Australian politics. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1979. While Whitlam's pronouncement suggested a radical reappraisal of Australian foreign policy, characterizations and explanations of Whitlam's policy have diverged considerably on whether in fact such a reappraisal took place. As it is not intended here to examine such analyses, refer to the following contributions: D.J. Murphy argues affirmatively in his 'New Nationalism ...' (1973); for arguments that centre on continuity in policy and the notion that external circumstances dictated changes, whichever party was at the helm of foreign policy, see Bull, Hedley, "The Whitlam Government's Perception of Our Role in the World", in Beddie, D.B., (ed.), Advance Australia - Where?, OUP, Melbourne, 1975. Arguments from the right are sustained by Santamaria, B.A., "Labor's First Six Months", Current Affairs Bulletin, July 1973. For a left-wing Marxist Critique refer to Catley, Robert and MacFarlane, Bruce, From Tweedledum to Tweedledee: The New Labor Government in Australia, ANZ Book Co, Sydney, 1974. Refer also to Camilleri, J., "In Search of Foreign Policy", Arena, Nos.32-33, 1973.

2 Address to the Australian Institute of Political Science, Canberra, 27 January 1973. Department of Foreign Affairs, News Release M/28, 27 January 1973.

3 In early 1973, Whitlam denied that these foundations were or could be altered by a change in government. See Whitlam, E.G., 'Opening Address', in McCarthy, G., (ed.), Foreign Policy for Australia: Choices for the Seventies, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1973, p.1.

preserved 'in the basic outlines of Australia's foreign policy'.[1] Hedley Bull considered that while many of the more dramatic announcements made by the Whitlam government in foreign policy reflected changes in the 'means and modalities' of policy, it had not deviated radically from its predecessors in its perception of Australia's basic interests and obligations;[2] the Labor government simply emerged from the 1960s to make the adjustments needed in the new circumstances of the 1970s because it 'was less encumbered by its own past policies and more free to adopt new ones'.[3]

However, it has been argued that the similarities between the Labor government and its L-CP predecessors in foreign policy were more significant that the differences, and what differences did exist were 'more matters of emphasis and style than of substance'.[4] To be sure, the constraints on Labor's foreign policy, as with its predecessors, were largely determined by events in the immediate region and by the nature of the States' system (and in particular, the relationships of the major global powers). But within these constraints, the Whitlam government's foreign policy 'responded creatively, imaginatively and sometimes, in the search of diplomatic novelty or Third World popularity, excessively to the opportunities which the new international situations afforded'.[5]

A close examination of the domestic context, as suggested by Camilleri, suggests Labor had two major objectives. First:

> it was anxious not to displease a broadly conservative population or the open hostility of dominant economic interests ... [second, it] had to give satisfaction to some of the more radical elements within the ALP, and this was achieved by the cultivation of a highly personalized and assertive style in the conduct of foreign policy.[6]

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1 Albinski, H.S., Australian External Policy Under Labor, p.351.

2 Bull, H., "The Whitlam Government's Perception of our Role in the World", in Beddie, B.D., (ed.), Advance Australia - Where?, p.30.

3 Ibid., p.31.

4 See comments by Creighton Burns in Beddie, B.D., (ed.), Advance Australia - Where?, p.190.

5 Meaney, N., "The United States" in Hudson, W.J., (ed.), Australia in World Affairs 1971-1975, p.180.

6 Camilleri, J.A., An Introduction to Australian Foreign Policy, P.102.

While Whitlam's overall approach enabled major policy adjustments to accommodate the changes underway in the international arena, it also facilitated a greater degree of international and regional diplomacy. In this context, many of these changes -- in particular America's rapprochement with China -- made it easier for the Whitlam Government to pursue its own understandings with the major regional powers, as well as emphasizing, in pursuit of its own independent policies, the objectives which it saw as being important in Southeast Asia.[1] As the Whitlam Government moved to view, and to identify with , the countries of the region in its own right, the maintenance of the bilateral relationship with Indonesia soon emerged as one of the main considerations in Australia's regional policies, even if Australian and Indonesian views were to conflict on a particular issue. As Portuguese rule in East Timor and its other colonies began to collapse, relating Australia's East Timor policy to such an approach became an increasingly important concern for the Whitlam Labor government, as it did for Whitlam's L-CP successor in late 1975, J.M. Fraser.

Chapter Seven of this study examines the East Timor crisis during the 1974-78 period. It is concerned to set Australian policies not only within an historical framework but also in the context of Australia's international environment. However, substantially domestic issues inevitably emerge as major considerations in these policies. The three following chapters examine the press, parliamentary debates and community debates on the East Timor issue. This is followed by the conclusion, in which an assessment is made of the influence of these factors on government policy during this controversial period.

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[1] For criticism of Whitlam's approach to the Southeast Asian region see Harries, O., 'Australia's Foreign Policy under Whitlam', Orbis, Vol.XIX No.3, 1975, p.1092-1093. Refer also to Miller's analysis of regional reaction to Whitlam's concept for a regional community -- Miller, J.D.B., "Australian Foreign Policy: Constraints and Opportunities - II", p.428.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EAST TIMOR (1974-1980)

Introduction

This chapter's main concern is with an examination of Australian Government policy towards East Timor, principally between 1974 and 1978. However, for the purposes of analysis the chapter has four major components. In view of the nature of the problems that Australia's policy encountered, particularly as it related to the process of decolonization in the territory, the chapter commences with a sketch of East Timor's socio-economic and political development under the Portuguese. The pattern of colonial rule severely retarded such development and it was to emerge as a significant factor in Australian, Indonesian and Portuguese policy perceptions. The chapter also focuses attention on actual events in the territory during 1974 and 1975, and explains the dynamics underlying party political developments within East Timor. In doing so, it combines with an analysis of the changing nature of Indonesia's response to these developments as it moved away from political self-determination towards military invasion and, subsequently, integration. Finally, the chapter briefly examines the character and direction of Australia's policy, the possible options, and the domestic political pressures encountered by Australian Governments over the East Timor situation.

A Background

The island of Timor, lying immediately to Australia's north-west, and west of New Guinea, is situated in the eastern part of the Indonesian Archipelago in the Lesser Sundas group (Nusa Tenggara Archipelago). The territory of East Timor is made up of the eastern half of the island, the enclave of Oecussi in Indonesian West Timor and the two smaller islands of Atauro and Jaco. With a population of 650 000 people, East Timor is similar in size to Guinea-Bissau, the former Portuguese colony which is now an independent republic in West Africa.

The Portuguese landed in Timor in the early 16th century in pursuit of the sandalwood trade. The Dutch, for similar reasons,

later established a foothold on the western half of the island. The boundary between East (usually called Portuguese East Timor) and West (later called Indonesian Timor when it was absorbed into the United States of Indonesia in 1949), first set in a treaty between Holland and Portugal in 1859, was concluded in 1913 at the Hague Court of Arbitration in the agreement called 'Sentenca Arbital', following over two hundred years of hostile engagements over the sandalwood riches[1]. Timor lay in indolent isolation until the Second World War. Although Portugal was neutral during the war (and thus also its colonies), Timor's perceived strategic significance[2] drew it into the front line of the war, and the island was occupied by Australian and Japanese troops. For some thirteen months (December 1941 until January 1943), four hundred Australian commandos -- selflessly assisted by the Timorese[3] -- engaged in guerilla warfare with 20 000 Japanese troops. However, with the withdrawal of the Australians in January 1943, the Timorese were subjected to a harsh Japanese military occupation which, coupled with the effect of famine brought about by the ruthless seizure of food by the Japanese, resulted in up to 60 000 deaths.[4]

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1 Jolliffe, J., East Timor: Nationalism and Colonialism. Queensland University Press, St. Lucia, 1978. pp.22-42. See also Hastings, P.," The Timor Problem - I", Australian Outlook, Vol.29, August 1975, pp.20-24.

2 The Australian Government at the time believed that the Japanese would use the island as a base for operations directed against Australia. However, James Dunn considers that 'had the Allies not intruded into the territory and transformed it into a war zone ... the Timorese would thus have been spared the devastating consequences of the military operations and occupation'. Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, The Jacaranda Press, Milton (Queensland), 1983, p.22. Nicol shows that the Australian Government's hand was forced when it became suspicious of Japan's interest in establishing air links with the island. Moreover, citing Australia's official war history, Nicol notes that the Australian Cabinet at the time did not believe that the Japanese would respect Portuguese Timor's neutrality. Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, Viza, Melbourne, 1978, p.18.

3 Callinan, B., Independent Company, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1953, pp.xxiv-xxvi.

4 Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, Canberra, Parliament of Australia, Legislative Research Service, July 1976, p.4.

The war had devastated East Timor; the main farms and villages had been destroyed, the economy was in ruins and the Timorese people, close to starvation, were completely demoralized. While the Portuguese returned to full control in 1945, post-war reconstruction was slow. Portugal had been economically weakened by the war, and its exclusion from the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of post-war Europe, ensured there would be very little effort to 'develop' the territory.

It was not until the 1960s that Portugal gave more attention to Timor's social and economic conditions. Facing increased pressure from the West through the United Nations to redress the colony's development problems, Portugal embarked in a belated development plan to rebuild its infrastructure, and to redevelop East Timor's agriculture and livestock resources.[1] However, such development was described as 'ill-conceived'[2] and 'superficial',[3] and as giving no 'significant improvement in the lot of the majority of the population'.[4]

It was also in the mid-1960s that the Portuguese moved towards a comprehensive education system (primary, secondary and technical schools, and religious seminaries). Although Portugal's education system has been described generally as being inadequate and unsatisfactory,[5] it did provide the basis for the emergence in the

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1 Freney argued that an abortive revolt in Viqueique in East Timor in 1959, combined with earlier outbreaks of liberation wars in all of Portugal's African colonies, was just as instrumental in directing the then Salazar regime in Portugal towards new 'development' policies in Timor as part of its overall colonial policy in the 1960s. Freney, D., "East Timor: The Modest Revolution", Australian Left Review, No.48, September 1975, pp.4-5. See also, Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, pp.33-34.

2 Hastings, P., "The Timor Problem - I", pp.24-25.

3 Freney, D., "The Modest Revolution", p.5. Bill Nichol, Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.29.

4 Dunn, J.S., "Portuguese Timor before and after the Coup, Options for the Future", unpublished paper, August 1974, quoted in P. Hastings, "The Timor Problem - I", p.25. Bill Nichol considered only ten percent of the population benefitted from Portugal's development policies. Nichol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.29.

5 Nicholl, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.24 and p.25.

early 1970s of a "politically conscious elite",[1] and it was to prove catalytic in the political developments of 1974-1975. While the nature of this educational process compelled students wishing to complete a tertiary education to go to Lisbon to further their studies (and, thus, heightening their political and social awareness)[2], many Timorese who successfully completed secondary school chose to remain, to enter seminaries, become teachers, join government service or enlist in the army.[3]

Notwithstanding these developments, there was still little evidence of any significant improvement in the well-being or living conditions in the wider Timorese community. Portuguese efforts in East Timor were less than ambitious and its development, in comparison with other states at a comparable level, had been grossly retarded.[4] The limited progress that had been made benefited mainly the Chinese section of the population, the small Portuguese business community, and the coffee and copra planters who were predominantly Chinese[5] and Portuguese. However, the export of these primary products, as well as goods of marketable quality, did little to redress the imbalances of a chronic trade deficit. This task lay with Portugal.[6]

Yet, it has been argued that agriculture and the exploitation of natural resources, generally, could have provided prospects for

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1 Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.8.

2 According to Hastings ("The Timor Problem - I", p.26), in 1975 there were seventy-seven Timorese students at tertiary-level institutions in Portugal with thirteen, due to graduate at the end of 1975, expected back in Timor to practise as doctors, engineers, and scientists (political, agricultural and natural).

3 Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.8.

4 Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, p.7. Nicholl, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, pp.25-27.

5 Much of the important retail business, the rural trade-store business and the private transport section, was in the hands of the Chinese. For a detailed discussion of Timor's socio-economic history see Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.12 ff and Hastings, P., "The Timor Problem - I", pp.29-30.

6 Nichol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.26.

economic 'development'[1] The search for minerals and oil had been conducted intermittently by Australian, American and Japanese companies since the early 1900s. However, no commercial quantities in these resources had been discovered when the political climate in 1975 forced companies to cease their operations.[2] While it has been asserted that the development of small holder agriculture and animal husbandry had, with good management, the potential to enable East Timor to be self-sufficient,[3] by 1974 there was little evidence in the countryside of any Portuguese efforts to meet these challenges and to improve the level of agriculture.

Party Political Developments within East Timor (April 1974-January 1975).

While such conditions prevailed in the three decades prior to the coup in Portugal in 1974, there is no evidence to suggest that it created unrest among the Timorese and that it gave rise to any kind of discussion about nationalism or independence. Throughout this period the colony had been sealed off from the outside world. The colony's remoteness and linguistic isolation, together with the controlled measures of the Portuguese Administration, did much to keep the Timorese ignorant of, and unprovoked by, the liberation struggles in Asia and of, closer to home, the upheavals taking place in nearby Indonesia.[4] Before the coup, therefore, there was no organized nationalist movement as such was waiting in the wings to capitalize on the developments of 25 April 1974. In Lisbon on that day the conservative Spinola regime was installed following the overthrow of the Caetono Government by middle-ranking military officers. Apart from the recalling of the Directorate-General of Security (DGS - political police) and the Armed Forces Movement's

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1 Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, pp.7-8; Nicholl, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.27 and pp.30-31.

2 Hamish McDonald, Suharto's Indonesia , P.191; Nicholl, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, pp.30-31.

3 Nicholl, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.30-31.

4 The only serious act of rebellion against the Portuguese Administration involved a group of indonesian refugees who were spawned by the embattled Permesta Movement in 1959. Some months after being granted political asylum, the group exploited discontent with the local administration and engineered an abortive uprising against the Administration. See Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, pp.11-12.

(AFM) disbanding of both the fascist corporate state party and the censorship commissions, the coup in Lisbon seemed to have had little impact on the administration in Timor. Unlike Portugal itself, there were no immediate sackings, the Governor was not recalled until some months later, and many of the old Portuguese officials remained to continue occupying their leading posts in Dili.[1]

Nevertheless, within a month of the coup in Portugal, three political groupings emerged in East Timor[2] -- The Association of Timorese Social Democrats (ASDT), the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) and the Timorese Popular Democratic Association (Apodeti). While Portuguese policy on the future of the colony was relatively uninformed at this stage, Portugal put forward three options for the future -- a continued association with the metropolitan power, independence, or integration with Indonesia -- around which political activities involving these groups[3] were to gravitate until civil war erupted in the territory, in August 1975.

The ASDT, formed on 20 May 1974, claimed to have secured the support of Timor's civil servants, teachers, urban workers and students, and demanded immediate independence.[4] The Timorese Democratic Union was made up of those in the higher levels of the civil service, native chiefs, some influential Chinese businessmen

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1 Dunn, James, Timor. The People Betrayed, p.56.

2 This account is based, among other sources, on Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, op.cit., Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, op.cit., and McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, op.cit.

3 We are concerned here mainly with these major parties, although three other small parties were formed in East Timor between April 1974 and August 1975 -- the APMT (the Populas Association of Monarchists of Timor) renamed KOTA (Klibur Oan Timur Aswain -- 'Sons of the Mountain Warriors'); Partido Trabalhista (Labour Party) and the Aditla Party (Democratic Association for the Integration of East Timor into Australia).

4 Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, p.17. The organizing committee of ASDT consisted of nine people (most of who were full-blooded Timorese) and included Francisco Xavier do Amaral, Nicolau Lobato, Aleixo Carte Real & Rui Fernandes. Jose Manuel Ramos Horta was not one of the original committee but he emerged as the group's best-known leader and spokesman.

and the greater part of the Portuguese community.[1] Formed on 11 May 1974, UDT was essentially a union established to protect the status quo.[2] It initially wanted progressive autonomy, although always under the Portuguese flag.[3] The third group, Apodeti, was founded on 27 May 1974, and made up of relatives and friends of those Timorese who were involved in the insurrection of 1959[4], some Timorese priests and a number of petty Kings and chiefs.[5] Its principal aim was for 'an autonomous integration into the Republic of Indonesia in accordance with international law' on the grounds of ethnic and historical links.[6]

While there is difficulty in estimating the relative popularity of the political parties from their early stages, there is evidence to suggest that UDT derived legitimate initial and popular support through its linkages to the village chiefs and township elites. From the outset, UDT was the most conservative of the three political groupings. It started out as a party strongly in favour of continued association with Portugal and was supported by most of the Portuguese and Timorese who were opposed to change. Due to increasing criticism by its opponents that UDT championed the continuation of East Timor's colonial status, the UDT leadership became increasingly drawn to the goal of eventual independence, and to the notion that the territory could be economically viable if foreign (principally Australian, American

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1 Hoadley, J.S., The Future of Portuguese Timor. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1975, p.9. The group was founded by Mario and Joao Carrascalo, Francisco Lopez da Cruz, Domingos de Oliveira and Cesar Augusto da Costa Mousinho.

2 Hill, H., The Timor Story. Walker Press, Melbourne, 1976, p.4.

3 Manifesto, UDT (Dili, 11 May 1974), p.1, reprinted in Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.337.

4 See p.289 (footnote 4).

5 Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, p.20. Jose Osorio Soares was behind APODETI's early activities and organization. Arnaldo dos Reis Aranjo, however, emerged as the group's founding president, with Hermenegildo Martins as vice-president and Casimiro dos Reis Aranjo (the President's son) as Apodeti's secretary.

6 Manifesto, Apodeti (Dili, 27 May 1974), reprinted in Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.326.

and Japanese) investment capital could be secured.

However, the UDT leadership was slow to develop its international activities and contacts. These developments, together with a political program that saw the group concentrate its political activities in the towns and on those members of the administrative elite, saw its popularity rapidly diminish in the face of active and ambitious recruitment campaigns being conducted by the fast-rising ASDT group (called after 12 September 1974, the Revolutionary Front for Independent East Timor, or Fretilin).

At first, ASDT called for East Timor's right to progressive autonomy towards independence, although the leadership was divided over its timing. Due to its small following in the territory, early ideas of a plebisite to decide East Timor's future were disgarded. As the UDT developed a strong backing, principally in the rural areas, the ASDT leadership began to consider remodelling ASDT on the Mozambique Liberation Front, Frelimo. Instrumental here were Horta, who had spent two years in Mozambique, and a small group of left-wing Timorese students who had experienced Frelimo's ideology within dissident intellectual circles in Lisbon. East Timor's independence soon emerged to be the group's central focus and, in line with its more radical outlook, ASDT became the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin).

The ASDT/Fretilin leadership sought first among the Timorese leaders to establish international contacts -- initially with Indonesia, and then Australia[1] -- to further its early aim of progressive autonomy. However, press reports in Jakarta and Canberra that military elements within the Indonesian leadership would oppose independence for the former colony served only to strengthen the resolve of the ASDT, and in August 1974 propel it towards increased radical activities and rhetoric.[2] Initially,

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[1] Horta began visiting Australia in mid-1974 to forge links with Australians (within the Government, and outside it) sympathetic to his party's cause. By the end of 1974 he had cast his net widely in Australia for support: in the Australian Parliament (especially from Peacock); within voluntary aid organizations; among the churches; and in the trade unions. This is developed further in the next three Chapters.

[2] Fretilin's move to a more radical position at this time coincided, and to some degree, reflected political changes taking place in Lisbon when the centre of power moved to the left with the resignation of conservative President Spinola

Fretilin promoted itself as the only legitimate representative of the Timorese people and its attitude towards other parties, in particular Apodeti, increasingly hardened.

The political goals put forward by Apodeti were soon overshadowed by the independence programs proclaimed by Fretilin and UDT, and at the peak of its influence the pro-integrationist party was never able to secure more than a small proportion of the politically conscious Timorese. By September 1974 when it became apparent that military leaders in Jakarta opposed the emergence of an independent East Timor (this is examined below), Apodeti became a focal point for pro-Indonesian activities and:

> in spite of the ideals expressed in its original manifesto, Apodeti soon became the vehicle for overt Indonesian propoganda and a channel for covert subversive operations, presenting a measure of endorsement of Jakarta's political strategy for East Timor.[1]

While the Indonesian Government sought to pursue its goal of incorporation by influencing the political process within the territory, its subsequent attempts to promote by overt and covert means the political advantage of its internal client only served to induce a countervailing coalition between Fretilin and UDT.[2]

The Fretilin/UDT Coalition

If the nature of their respective aims polarized the three groupings, then it also tended to exaggerate the differences between them in the early stages of their political development. In basic terms, the aims of UDT and Fretilin, and to a strong degree Apodeti, were rather similar, with a broad common ground linking their respective leaderships. This included their respective foundation 'constitutions' (manifestos), in which all made references to a support for human rights, freedom of expression and religious liberty, while denouncing corruption and

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and his replacement by Costa Gomes, Portugal's former army Chief of Staff. Gomes had the support of the Prime Minister, as well as Colonel Vasco dos Santos Goncalves and his left-wing Armed Forces Movement (MFA). Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.171.

1 Dunn, James, Timor: A People Betrayed, p.72. Indonesia's policies are examined in detail below.

2 Nicol, B., Timor: The Stillborn Nation, p.247.

racial discrimination.[1] There were also similarities in the backgrounds of the leaders,[2] with the majority remaining friends during the early months of the formation of the parties.[3] However, by late 1974, widening differences characterized these links, particularly between elements of the Fretilin and UDT leaderships, and were rooted in deepening suspicions and antagonisms related to each party's increasingly earnest struggle to extend its support base, particularly in the rural areas.[4]

While Apodeti did not seem to have the same level of support as the other two political groups, conflicting views emerged on the relative support enjoyed by ASDT/Fretilin and UDT. It was argued, for instance, that in the four-month period to December 1974, Fretilin's membership had ballooned and by mid-1975 'had the edge on its opponent largely because it was seen as the main independence party, and was also ... more aggressive, disciplined and purposeful in its political activities...'.[5] On the other hand, Nicol assessed that while Fretilin pursued a line that was critical of colonialism and strong on demands for independence, it 'obscured the details of Fretilin's political manifesto, which ... tended to be vague on the question of post-independence political and economic structures'. When the Fretilin leadership did address these issues and moved 'to develop an image of the party as being constructive and well planned' it was designed more for overseas than domestic consumption, and did little to broaden Fretilin's

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1 See Jolliffe, J., East Timor, Appendix A: Founding Political Programmes of Apodeti, Fretilin, and UDT, pp.325-338.

2 A good account can be found in Jolliffe, J., East Timor, pp.61-69.

3 Van Dijk, L., "East Timor", Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs, pp.7-10. Van Dijk highlighted the parochialism of Timorese politics when he observed that these leaders were related in some way, and had all attended educational institutions together.

4 Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, p.21. There is also an excellent account of this transformation in Jolliffe, J., East Timor, pp.61-91.

5 Dunn, James, Timor: A People Betrayed, p.69.

support base.[1] On balance, it would seem Nicol's understanding of developments in East Timor in late 1974s was the correct one and was borne out by Fretilin's decision to form a coalition with UDT, in an attempt to overcome its electoral problems and to attract widespread support.

The idea of forming a coalition with UDT had been discussed in the past by the Fretilin leadership as a way of overcoming the party's electoral problems. On such occasions, however, arguments put by conservative elements within the party (in particular by Horta) that Fretilin would benefit from UDT's popularity were overshadowed by counter-arguments that a coalition was against the spirit of the party's political manifesto. These ideological considerations, however, gave way to the realities of the situation and the need for Fretilin to improve its electoral stocks, and this emerged as the party's basic aim in forming the coalition.

For its part, UDT at first showed little interest in the notion of a coalition. While UDT's original guiding principle was that the relationship between East Timor and Portugal be sustained, its plans were upset when the Portuguese (Pires) administration arrived in November 1974 to decolonize the territory.[2] In detail, UDT's program envisaged that East Timor would become self-governing, but not independent, and that Portugal would retain a province on the island for 20 years.

By the end of 1974, UDT, under pressure from the Pires administration to form a coalition with Fretilin, accepted the possibility of a transition to independence within five years, bringing it as close to Fretilin policy as the two parties had ever been. With friction and resentments developing between the two parties at both the popular (rural) and leadership levels, the Pires administration sought to divert this conflict and convinced both parties that a coalition between them would not only overcome their differences but (and playing on the now strong anti-Indonesian sentiments of both parties) isolate the pro-Indonesian

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1 Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, pp.81-83.

2 Colonel Lemos Pires was accompanied by four officers (Majors Adelino Coelho, Mota, Jonatas and Captain Ramos) and immediately established a military council. By February 1975 they had established a Decolonization Commission and it provided the MFA with an effective mechanism for its decolonization program.

party, Apodeti, and reduce its influence. Thus, Colonel Pires and his team played an important role in bringing about the coalition between the two parties. Tactically, however, Fretilin's intention in forming the coalition was to secure the makings of a conservative and highly popular party and following its achievement on 22 January 1975, it provided an immediate upturn in Fretilin's support. While ever this increase in support was sustained in the long term:

> Fretilin had no worries. But if this did not happen, the party would have to have a total reassessment of UDT, of the coalition and of its own role in Timor's new politics.[1]

The Changing Nature of Indonesia's Response (April 1974 - January 1975)

As these changes in political circumstances took shape in East Timor, it quickly emerged that Indonesia viewed the prospect of an independent East Timor with deep apprehension. Although Foreign Affairs Minister Malik gave written assurances in June 1974 that the Indonesian Government or people had no intentions toward expansionism or the occupation of other territories, and noted that the 'independence of every country is the right of every nation, with no exception for the people of Timor', by September that year Indonesia was actively intervening in East Timor's internal affairs. By December 1974, Malik had turned full circle and, rejecting independence as 'not realistic' in view of 'the backwardness and economic weakness of the population', declared that the former Portuguese colony had only two options open to it: union with Indonesia or the continuation of Portugal's control. Why did Indonesia change its course? What were her motives?

Under both Sukarno and Suharto, Indonesian political attitudes towards the territory had always reflected a sense of complacency. When the Republic of Indonesia was declared independent by Nationalist leaders in 1945, it did not lay claim to, or challenge Portuguese colonial rule in, East Timor. On the contrary, as Indonesia pressed a claim to West New Guinea during the next two decades, it made the point of denying an interest in the territory and, as we noted earlier, maintained that its claim to West New

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[1] Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.92.

Guinea was based on the territory's former position within the Dutch East Indies.[1] Following the overthrow of the Caetano Government in Lisbon in April 1974, the situation changed.

While some Indonesian leaders, like the vice-president of the Indonesian Parliament, John Naro, promptly expressed the hope that steps would be taken by the Indonesian Government to 'find... a special policy on Portuguese Timor so that finally that area will once again return to Indonesian control',[2] the Government spent the next two months gauging the internal political situation in the territory. It also secured the views of foreign leaders on decolonization and:

> gained the impression that the Portuguese would remain for some time and that, in any case, decolonization would probably lead to a continued Portuguese role in East Timor. To some Indonesians, especially in the Foreign Ministry, this likelihood took much of the heat out of the Timor problem.[3]

In this context, the Indonesian Foreign Minister's response to ASDT's diplomatic efforts is not difficult to explain. At a time also, when Indonesia, in its on-going search for economic assistance, was concerned for its international reputation, Malik was publicly prepared to guarantee an independent future for East Timor. In a letter dated 17 June 1974 it was stated that (in detail):

(a) The independence of every country is the right of every nation with no exception for the people in Timor.

(b) The government, as well as the people of Indonesia, have no intention to increase their territory, or to occupy other territories other than what is stipulated in their Constitution. This reiteration is to give you a clear view, so that there may be no doubt in the minds of the people of Timor in expressing their own wishes.

(c) For this reason, whoever will govern in Timor in the future after independence can be assured that the government of Indonesia will always strive to maintain good relations, friendship and cooperation for the

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1 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.191. See also Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, pp.101-102.

2 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.193.

3 Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.108.

benefit of both countries.[1]

However, Malik's gesture unwittingly contributed to an upsurge in Timorese nationalism, and the advent of a radical political movement (eventually styling itself Fretilin) saw this Indonesian goodwill transmuted into one of deepening apprehension. The basis for this, as we saw in Chapter One, lay deep in Indonesia's historical preoccupation with the security of its fissiparous archipelago. This was exacerbated by the influential role played by the military in the government and it emerged as a crucial factor in heightening Indonesian anxieties over developments in East Timor throughout the next eighteen months.

Indeed, by August 1974, the Indonesian Government had assessed that an independent East Timor was not in Indonesia's best interests. The driving force of such a view was a small group of influential military figures who, while at variance with the official position adopted by Malik and his Foreign Ministry, exercised direct influence on President Suharto. For this group -- which included Major-General Ali Murtopo, Admiral Sudomo, Major-General Benny Murdani and Lieutenant-General Yoga Sugama -- the arguments for absorption were compelling and were crystallizing at the time of a proposed meeting, in September, for informal talks between Suharto and Australia's Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam.

First, while the retention of links with Portugal would be counter to Indonesia's strongly held belief in the principle of self-determination, it was considered that this would be unlikely due to the Portuguese disposition of wanting to divest itself of financially draining colonial vestiges. Alternatively, this would leave the option of independence. However, the colony had been neglected under the Portuguese and its inhabitants had endured social conditions, nutrition, health and education standards that were extremely low. Further, as the bulk of the people were subsistence farmers and fishermen, unless large quantities of natural resources were found and exploited, it was unlikely that the island would remain economically viable and stable.

Second, the colony's cloudy future concerned a security-conscious Indonesia. On one level, there was an historical fear

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[1] Documented in Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.66. Malik reinforced this in an interview with Hamish McDonald in August 1975 (Sydney Morning Herald, 18 August 1975).

that independence for the colony may stimulate secessionists to revive their activities in Indonesia's outer islands.[1] On another level, an independent East Timor under a weak, divided and aid-dependent government could become susceptible to subversion, externally inspired and promoted. In essence, East Timor could become a soft-underbelly, exacerbated further by a strong Chinese community which could establish links with China in the wake of any Portuguese attempts to establish relations with China.

However, a counter to these arguments was one overriding factor -- a concern for Indonesia's international image, so assiduously nurtured under the guidance of Suharto and Malik. These Indonesian leaders wanted not only to bury latent regional fears of Indonesia's historical expansionist tendencies, but also to maintain strong financial links with the West. In essence, Indonesia did not want to take any action that could erode its position of international respectability.[2] Furthermore, few Timorese were interested in the possibility of Timor becoming part of Indonesia, as the Portuguese territory had been long separated from the remainder of the archipelago, 'exacerbating the ethnic and political differences between the peoples of the Portuguese and the Indonesian sides of the islands'.[3] Thus, in terms of culture and education, the Timorese had developed along different lines from that of their Indonesian 'cousins'. Moreover, the example of West Irian, politically and economically, offered little incentive to the Timorese to believe that integration with Indonesia would present any real prospect of working out an autonomous and productive political and economic existence within the Indonesian Republic.

Consequently, Indonesia embarked on a low-key diplomatic offensive in the territory to improve its image and increase its

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1 Albinski, H.S., Australian External Policy Under Labor, p.107. According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (London), a fundamental and sustained concern in the decision to invade East Timor was that 'Indonesia feared the example that an East Timorese independence movement might present to separatist movements in nearby Maluku and Salawesi...'. (Strategic Survey, Annual Report, I.I.S. Studies, London, 1975, p.48).

2 For a development of these themes see Hill, H., The Timor Story, p.9.

3 Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, p.26.

domestic influence, while in the UN it prepared to negotiate with Portugal over East Timor's future. Fundamental to the former was a process of developing friendly working relations with the local Portuguese leadership in Timor,[1] while gently nurturing the idea of attaching the territory to Indonesia as a province with special self-governing status. Paramount to the latter was the ongoing process of sounding out the attitudes of its neighbours towards decolonization in Portuguese Timor. In this context, Australia's response, carried with Whitlam to Indonesia in September 1974, could well have been crucial.

With the shift to the left in September 1974 of the new regime in Lisbon, together that same month with the radicalization of the ASDT and the UDT's declaration that it favoured East Timor's independence, the Murtopo group began showing its hand. At one level, the Indonesian press expressed increasing concerns about the potential the Timor issue had to destabilize the immediate region[2]. It agreed that:

> the Indonesian public can see annexation of Timor as an act of generosity -- one which would save the Timorese from Portuguese colonialism, domination by outside powers, infiltration by Communists, subversion by Chinese, deception by Fretilin political instability, poverty and general backwardness.[3]

At another level, the Murtopo group's plan to acquire East Timor emerged. The aim of Operasi Komodo, as it was called, was to bring about the territory's integration with the Indonesian Republic.

Initially, the plan was more of a propaganda and political campaign than a military operation and it was conducted by Murtopo, who by October 1974 'had firmly taken control of the Timor 'project' for the Indonesian Government, issuing press commentary and sending personal emissaries abroad to inform governments about

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1 Many of the Timorese elite and the Chinese were loyal to Portugal believing that the best guarantee of maintaining its economic superiority and distinct cultural identity was through links with Portugal.

2 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.194. McDonald noted that one of the driving forces behind such an opinion was the Ali Murtopo group's newspaper, Berita Yudha.

3 Hoadley, J.S., The Future of Portuguese Timor, p.19.

Indonesia's concerns'.[1] Murtopo's brief also required a major diplomatic effort, designed to persuade the government in Portugal to understand and accept Indonesia's hardening views on the Timor issue. By mid-October, meetings in Portugal with the MFA's General da Costa Gomez (General Spinola's successor) and his Ministers, had secured Portugal's consent to an Indonesian plan to begin influencing opinion within East Timor, even though elements within the Portuguese Government (including the Decolonization Minister, Dr Almeida Santos) still wished to have East Timor's political future decided by an act of self-determination.[2]

> During the remainder of the year, Indonesia's Operasi Komodo: took more definite shape ... Opsus[3] took the leading role, with other agencies contributing where necessary. Ali Murtopo's network ran from Jakarta across to and over the border. Advising on diplomatic strategy were his political backroom team in the Jakarta academic-style institution, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), which had become an important point of contact for foreign diplomats, academics and journalists ... On the operational side, the operation worked out of the closely guarded AKA Building, Ali Murtopo's business headquarters in a quiet Jakarta suburb.[4]

By January 1975 Operasi Komodo was aimed at creating political destabilization in the territory through infiltration and intelligence activities.[5] A key role was being played by the Indonesian Consul in Dili which sought to strengthen the credibility of Indonesia's internal client, Apodeti, and to create an exaggerated impression of the extent of its activities and influence. At another level, Radio Kupang in West Timor was broadcasting almost daily commentary that branded Fretilin as 'Communist' and UDT as 'neo-fascist'. At the same time, preparations for a full-scale military operation were being put

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1 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.195. See also Dunn, James, Timor: A People Betrayed, p.112.

2 For a description of Murtopo's talks with the Portuguese. See McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, pp.196-197.

3 Opsus was a Special Operations Unit that had emerged from a special intelligence cell within the Strategic Reserve Command (KOSTRAD) which, in the early 1960s, had been run by Murtopo, as a Major.

4 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, pp. 198-199.

5 Ibid., p.199. See also Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.88, p.92 and pp.112-116.

into shape.[1]

Ironically, Indonesia's blatant attempt to promote by overt and covert means the political advantage of Apodeti and the benefits of joining Indonesia, only served to make Indonesia appear more threatening and aggressive and induce a countervailing coalition between Fretilin and UDT. This alignment in January 1975, and the absence of any quantifiable political disorder in the former colony, denied Indonesia any credible justification for armed intervention. In any event, Indonesia still considered that the Portuguese Government was a major factor in determining the course of events in its former colony. Following early indications that Indonesia was preparing for force at this time, Suharto moved to restrain 'hawks' in Jakarta who were urging for immediate military intervention, and looked instead to the political negotiations due to take place in Macau in the middle of the year between the three main Timorese parties. While this saw a shift in the aims and activities of Operasi Komodo towards a political/ diplomatic strategy, including splitting the Fretilin - UDT coalition,[2] circumstances arose during the course of 1975 which provided Indonesia with the justification and opportunity for such intervention.

Fretilin/UDT: From Coalition to Conflict (January - August 1975)

Following its formation on 22 January 1975, the Fretilin/UDT coalition immediately repudiated Apodeti and the notion of integration with Indonesia, and aimed at pressing the Portuguese authorities to facilitate the process of decolonization and self-determination. By the beginning of March, the newly-appointed Governor to Timor, Colonel Mario Lemos Pires conferred with the Committee on Decolonization in Lisbon, and by the end of the month events were gaining momentum towards a peaceful transition of power from the Portuguese to the Timorese. Indeed, by early May, a

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1 Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.116. When the issue of a proposed invasion entered the public arena in Australia in late February -- due to leaked defence intelligence reports -- Indonesia temporarily abandoned the idea of military action and attention was directed towards a strategy of political manipulation (the issue of a military invasion is examined below).

2 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.203.

meeting of the Fretilin/UDT coalition, Apodeti and the Decolonization Commission was convened, at which plans were discussed for an election in Timor in October 1976. With a Portuguese proposal some weeks later for a meeting of all interested Timorese parties in Macau, the stage was set for a peaceful transfer of power. However, any gains from this high level of diplomatic activity were to be subsequently eroded when, in May 1975, UDT withdrew from the coalition. As the reasons for this split, which marked the beginning of the end of Timor's foray into political independence, vary with interpretation, a brief discussion of the state of relations between, and the pressures on, the political parties in Timor is necessary at this point.

In the early months of 1975, the coalition was able to gather increased support, particularly in the rural areas, and there did not seem to be any fundamental contradictions between its proposed transitional program for independence and that put forward by the Portuguese administration's Decolonization Commission.[1] However, the merger was a shaky one and the course of the territory's politics came under pressure from a number of areas. In particular, underlying and continuing UDT resentment and distrust of Fretilin was exacerbated by conflicts and tensions arising from increasing rivalry between left-and-right wing elements in Lisbon over the course of decolonization. The effect of this conflict in Portugal:

> inevitably came to be felt in East Timor, with UDT looking to the Spinolistas and the Christian Democrats, and Fretilin leaders identifying themselves with the Socialists and the new generation of MFA leaders. In the aftermath of the abortive right-wing coup by forces under the leadership of General Spinola, tensions inevitably began to emerge within the UDT-Fretilin coalition ... leading to suspicions by UDT leaders that MFA officers were conspiring to place Fretilin in the leading decolonization role at the expense, if not exclusion, of UDT.[2]

By this time, as we noted earlier, Indonesia's attitude had begun to change. Central to this change was a growing Indonesian perception of the revolutionary fervor of Fretilin's left-wing, which now included recently returned students from Portugal who had

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[1] Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.98.

[2] Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.89.

established links with left-wing elements within Australia.

This perception manifested itself at a March meeting in London between Major-General Murtopo, senior Indonesian diplomats and Portuguese officials, including Dr Almeido Santos, the Portuguese Minister for Decolonization. At this meeting Portugal accepted integration as the best outcome and agreed not to obstruct reasonable efforts by Indonesia to promote integration.[1] From this point on, Independence was downgraded as a viable option by Indonesian spokespersons, and the focus of their statements, together with those emerging from the Indonesian press, turned to East Timor's backwardness and economic unviability.

Notably, Antara portrayed East Timor as falling into the hands of leftist groups, who were using intimidation and threats to consolidate their authority.[2] The New Standard, like Antara, expressed fears of a communist takeover. However, by this time, Murtopo was claiming that while the territory should be incorporated into the Indonesian Republic for geographic and ethnic reasons, strategic considerations were of paramount importance. In particular he feared that an:

> area which is small and weak will easily fall prey to power plays of great powers. The adoption of integration into Indonesia might be the best solution for the implementation of decolonization.[3]

However, with Apodeti totally isolated and enjoying only the support of the Indonesian authorities, Indonesia realized it was losing influence -- and with it the likelihood of integration by non-military means -- and shifted the focus of its activities onto the right-wing parties in East Timor, in particular the conservative UDT leadership. By June -- having played on UDT's suspicious and prejudices against the far more radical Fretilin, as well as against the left Portuguese officers in control in Dili -- Indonesia had guided the UDT leadership (in particular Lopes da Cruz) towards favouring East Timor's integration with Indonesia.[4]

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1 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.201. Jolliffe, J., East Timor, pp.112-113.

2 The Age, 28 February 1975.

3 The Age, 25 February 1975.

4 Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.298. McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesian, p.203.

Throughout this four-month period, these developments coincided with, and continued to be reinforced by, intensifying Indonesian Government propaganda activity being directed at Timor, as well as by an upsurge in Jakarta press reports alleging that a 'hate Indonesia campaign' was being waged by the Portuguese authorities in Timor. In the event, such claims were strongly denied by Portuguese officials and Timorese leaders, and by Australian journalists in Timor documenting events at the time.[1]

In the meantime, as the political situation deteriorated, the Portuguese authorities in Dili were receiving little guidance from Lisbon on the implementation of its decolonization policy. Indeed, with the new MFA leadership now concerned more with restructuring the metropolitan economy and society, little interest was being shown in the politics of East Timor. Inevitably, with the idea of conceding the former colony to Indonesia emerging to be an acceptable option to the Portuguese, Lisbon's initial proposal of a five year period of political development -- through local then national elections -- was considerably shortened, and was to be discussed at the decolonization talks in Macau in June 1975.

The Decolonization Talks (May and June 1975).

The first phase of talks on decolonization took place in Dili on 7 May, when the Decolonization Commission met with a Fretilin/UDT delegation. While Apodeti did not participate -- arguing it would do so only when the coalition accepted Timor's integration with Indonesia[2] -- it was agreed that a transitional government be formed in October 1975, and that elections for a national consultative assembly be held a year later. The acceptance of a role for Apodeti was a sensitive issue at these talks with the Decolonization Commission pressing for Apodeti's presence at the next session of negotiations at Macau in June. Portugal also proposed that should Apodeti not be represented in the transitional government, it should then compete in the proposed assembly elections. Fretilin took issue with these proposals -- arguing that it was unacceptable to discuss decolonization with a party committed to 'recolonization' -- and the talks served only to

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[1] See Chapter Eight.

[2] Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.95.

put stress on what was an increasingly shaky coalition.

The disharmony between Fretilin and UDT continued following these initial discussions. While this was due to the proposal that Apodeti have a role in the transitional process (with UDT favouring such a role and Fretilin against),[1] differences still existed between the two parties on the timing and nature of the transfer of power, with UDT favouring gradual movement towards self-government and Fretilin preferring a rapid transfer of power.[2] At the same time, moves by Fretilin to radicalize the coalition's education and agricultural programs alienated the UDT leadership, and gave rise to increasing incidents of conflict between supporters of the two parties in the townships of Dili, Maubisse and Oecusse, and in the countryside.[3] At the end of May, as Portugal moved with plans to hold further talks on transition in Macau, UDT unilaterally withdrew from the coalition, and it marked 'the beginning of a crisis slide in Timorese politics'.[4] While the coalition had ruptured -- precipitated in the main by its inability to reconcile its position for a united stance at the impending talks, and by mounting Indonesian pressure to destabilize the political situation in the territory -- the Macau talks took place from 26 to 28 June 1975. Fretilin, however, chose not to participate.

Fretilin's decision to boycott the talks seemed to centre on a strong opposition to the likely presence at the talks of Apodeti -- now being actively encouraged by the Dili administration to attend[5] -- and it intensified a situation that could only have been further aggravated when, in a continuation of the dialogue initiated in March, the Portuguese held separate talks with Indonesian officials immediately following the close of the Macau conference on 29 June. While the main talks gave rise to a Constitutional Law for the

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1 Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.299.

2 Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.95.

3 Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.115.

4 Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.300.

5 Ibid., p.300. See also Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, pp.95-96.

ultimate decolonization of East Timor,[1] the territory's fate rested largely on what was taking place behind closed doors between Portugal and Indonesia, and in discussions between the UDT leadership and Indonesian officials.

A visit by three UDT leaders to Indonesia between 25 July and 6 August 1975, in particular, seemed to seal Timor's fate when the visitors were told (on 2 August) by Indonesian officials, namely Murtopo and General Surono,[2] that Indonesia could not accept the prospect of an independent East Timor on its border, and, with a view to establishing an anti-Communist front, that steps be taken to link up with Apodeti.[3] Murtopo argued that Fretilin was a communist movement and that it was poised to launch a bid for power in mid-August. It was also conveyed to the UDT leaders that Indonesia would 'close its eyes' to any moves by anti-communist forces to counter such a development.[4] With this, UDT plunged Timor into a series of events which were to seal the territory's political and historical fate.

The UDT Coup and the Ensuing Civil War (August - December 1975)

On returning to Dili on 6 August, the UDT leaders found the situation was tense. Amidst continuing rumours of impending military action by Fretilin, the UDT leadership staged on 9 and 10

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1 Constitutional Law No.7/75 was promulgated on 17 July 1975. While it did not make reference to provisional government, the law set October 1976 as the date for a general election for a popular assembly which would then determine the territory's political future. Furthermore, Portugal's sovereignty would end in October 1978. Jolliffe, J., East Timor, P.116. See also McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.204. The progress made at the Macau talks is also detailed by Dunn in Dunn, J., Timor. A People Betrayed, pp.96-99.

2 Deputy Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces. According to R. Woolcott, Surono and Murdani were driven by the need not to have a communist dominated Fretilin in the archipelago, and drew parallels with Cuba. Harris, personal interview with R. Woolcott, Canberra, April 1988.

3 Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.298.

4 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.205. See also Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.167.

August a series of anti-communist rallies.[1] During the early hours of 11 August UDT moved to seize power, first securing arms from the police headquarters and then key installations in Dili and Baucau, including the airport and radio station. It broadcast an ultimatum to the Portuguese authorities, including in their demands immediate independence, the imprisonment of the Fretilin leadership and the expulsion of certain Portuguese officials that UDT considered were Communists. The Portuguese Government rejected the ultimatum and unsuccessfully called for talks with UDT and Fretilin. Fighting subsequently broke out in Dili and Baucau resulting in a large number of casualties, and UDT gaining control over the urban centres. The Portuguese administration failed to intervene. By 27 August it was in a helpless and demoralized position and the Governor transferred the administration to the off-shore island of Atauro.[2]

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[1] It was at this time that the Antara agency announced that the leadership of UDT, together with that of two smaller parties, KOTA and Trabalhista[1] had formed a coalition on the Indonesian side of Timor. It called itself the Movimento Anti-Communista (MAC) and 'became the front for the Indonesian invasion of East Timor on 7 December'.[2] The agency also stated that UDT President Francisco Lopes da Cruz, favoured the integration of East Timor with Indonesia and had called on Indonesia to intervene militarily to end the crisis. In the interim, Fretilin, seemingly in effective control of most of East Timor, established a 'transitional administration', which coincided with Indonesian complaints of Fretilin attacks on Indonesian-Timor border villages. Shortly, thereafter, Indonesian Foreign Minister Malik began issuing what proved to be a precursory statement that Timor's potential for becoming a base for Communism was being realized.

1. Klibur Oan Tinse Aswain (KOTA) and Partido Trabalhista (Labour Party). The former was a monarchist party in favour of retaining the Liuris as traditional leaders. It was formed by former Apodeti leaders who broke away when it became clear that Indonesia would not restore the Liuris to traditional positions of power.

2. Nichterlein, S., "The Struggle for East Timor: Prelude to Invasion", Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol.7, No.4, 1977, p.495.

[2] Jolliffe noted two major reasons for the Portuguese Administration's inaction: (i) it awaited the arrival from Lisbon of a peace-keeping mission which failed to arrive due to Indonesian obstructionism. It was not until 20 August that the next 'peace-maker' from Lisbon arrived (Dr Almeida Santos), well after fighting had begun in Dili; (ii) Portugal's (MFA) policy of apartidarismo (or political neutrality), in both Portugal itself and in its colonies. Jolliffe, J., East Timor, pp.125-126. See also Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, pp.171-172.

In the intervening period Fretilin had, on 15 August, proclaimed a general armed insurrection against all 'traitors of the fatherland'[1] and, within five days, its forces were occupying the Armed Forces Training Centre at Ailen after being joined by troops in Dili. On 20 August, Governor Pires and the remaining Portuguese military and civilian personnel had retreated to a small defensive area in the Dili port suburb of Farol where they were immediately overwhelmed by refugees and under sporadic gunfire. Within a week the Portuguese administration, driven by a sense of helplessness and frustration, fled to Atauro, leaving Fretilin to raid the Portuguese arsenal and take an estimated 15 000 weapons. By mid-September, having earlier mounted a counter-offensive, Fretilin had captured Dili and Baucau and controlled most of the territory. The UDT and Apodeti forces collapsed, their leaders either captured by Fretilin or having escaped to Australia or Indonesian Timor. By the end of September, Fretilin controlled virtually all of East Timor, with the exception of the Oecusse enclave and the island of Atauro.[2]

In the meantime, Indonesia resisted the opportunity presented by these developments to intervene militarily. While it was maintaining a naval presence off Dili by the end of August, and training Apodeti forces in the border region, the Indonesian President did not yield to pressures from his political and security advisers (notably Defence Minister Panggabean, Murdani, and, by this time, Malik[3]) to militarily intervene.[4] Suharto was mindful of the consequences of intervention -- not least in terms of the reactions of western banks -- and lent initially towards diplomacy in seeking a resolution to what was now clearly a political quagmire. At one level, Indonesia used its powers to obstruct Portuguese efforts to bring together an international peace force to bring the warring parties to the negotiating table. At another level, Indonesia unsuccessfully attempted in early

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1 Quoted in McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.206.

2 Ibid.

3 McDonald noted that by this stage, Malik 'feared being blamed if a more diplomatic path led into a quagmire'. McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.207.

4 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue: I", p.215. McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.207.

September to pry an invitation from Portugal to restore order.[1] Throughout this period, selected units of the Indonesian armed forces were on alert. After the failure of this latter initiative -- which coincided with an evident consolidation of control by Fretilin -- Indonesia undertook more direct efforts to protect its interests and by early October 'a new phase of the Timor war had opened'.[2]

On 7 October Indonesia successfully undertook its first major military operation against Fretilin forces when, in response to a Fretilin operation on 24 September that dislodged UDT forces from the border fort of Batugade, Saudi Yudha (formerly RPKAD) Indonesian Commandos -- with air and naval gunfire support -- mounted a successful counter attack. Within days several hundred Indonesian troops had crossed the border into East Timor and, on 16 October, mounted a major assault on the East Timorese towns of Balibo and Maliana.[3] An entirely Indonesian operation, the principal military objective was to secure the regional centre of Maliana.[4] The operation involved a series of coordinated attacks by over 1 200 men[5] on at least five other border towns between 14 and 16 October. While the small Fretilin garrison of 40 men at Balibo quickly retreated in the dawn attack of 16 October, five Australian-based newsmen[6] remained to continue documenting the Indonesian military presence in East Timor -- the main reason they were there,[7] although such a presence was being vigorously denied

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1 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.208.

2 Ibid., p.210.

3 Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.228.

4 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.210. See also, Leifer, M., Indonesia's Foreign Policy, p.157.

5 Estimates vary between 1 200 to 2 000 Indonesian troops, assisted by 100 Timorese partisans. See Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.306. Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.235.

6 Greg Shackleton, Tony Stewart and Gary Cunningham from HSV Channel 7 in Melbourne. Brian Peters and Malcolm Rennie were from the Channel 9 network in Melbourne. Shackleton and Stewart were Australian. Cunningham was from New Zealand. Rennie was a British citizen, as was Peters.

7 Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.240.

by the Indonesian Government.[1]

There have been a number of accounts of the circumstances surrounding the deaths of the journalists and it is possible to put together a consistent reconstruction of how and when they were killed.[2] It seems probable that during the assault by an estimated 300 Indonesian troops on Balibo, the newsmen remained in the village area to film. It is Dunn's reasonable belief that in doing so the five men were:

> presumably confident that their non-combatant status would be identified and respected ... after all [Indonesia] was Australia's nearest neighbour, and a great deal had been said in the previous two years about the 'close and friendly relations' that had developed between the two countries.[3]

However, while the newsmen had attempted to indicate their identities as non-combatant Australians -- by wearing distinctly civilian clothing and painting both the word 'Australia' and a rough sketch of an Australian flag on the house in Balibo in which they were staying -- they came under fatal gun-fire from the advancing Indonesian forces. In the circumstances, all credible evidence points to the conclusion that the journalists were not the victims of a misunderstanding or an accident, particularly when account is taken of McDonald's understanding that the Indonesian forces involved in the assault were 'under explicit orders to kill all witnesses to their covert intrusion into foreign territory'.[4] Furthermore, this evidence also propounds that the Australian Government, through the Department of Defence's electronic

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1 Ibid., p.229. Dunn notes Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister Malik's public denials in mid-October that Indonesian troops were involved in the border fighting, but believes Malik knew little of the covert operations being conducted under Operasi Komodo.

2 For an account of the incident, see inter alia, Jolliffe, J., East Timor, pp.166-177; Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, pp.233-239; McDonald, H., "Death at Balibo", National Times, 7 July 1979. See also Dale van Atta and Brian Toohey, "The Timor Papers", Part I, National Times, 30 May - 5 June 1982; Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, pp.306-310.

3 Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.233.

4 McDonald, H., "Death at Balibo", National Times, 7 July 1979.

surveillance system,[1] knew by 17 October of the assault on Balibo and the deaths of the five journalists[2] (this is examined in more detail below).

Heavy fighting was to continue in the Balibo/Maliana region in the weeks after the original attack. Citing subsequent Indonesian warships bombardments and troop activity, and the lack of political and legal direction from Portugal, Fretilin announced on 28 November 1975 the independence of East Timor from Portugal, renaming the territory the Democratic Republic of East Timor (DRET). In the meantime, while continuing its covert operations in East Timor, the Indonesians engaged in talks in Rome in early November with the Portuguese who not only refused to recognize any claim by Fretilin for recognition of sovereign status but seemed 'to endorse Indonesia's right to be a principal party to the conflict'.[3] With this, the die appeared to be cast and when Fretilin asserted its independence, a 'provoked'[4] Indonesia reacted quickly. On 29 November, the Movimento Anti-Communista (MAC)[5] declared East Timor a part of Indonesia. On 1 December, Malik stated that 'The solution to the Timor question is now the front line of battle'.[6] On 4 December, Indonesia's Information Minister, Mashuri, issued an authoritative statement in which the prospect of decisive intervention was signalled.[7]

Overt action did not follow immediately[8] but began on 7

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1 The Defence Signals Division of the Department of Defence is located in Melbourne, Victoria.

2 See Hall, R., The Secret State, Sydney, Cassell, 1978, pp.149-150.

3 Leifer, M., Indonesia's Foreign Policy, p.157.

4 Renouf, A., The Frightened Country, p.446.

5 See p.308, (footnote 1).

6 For an account of this period see Jolliffe, J., East Timor, pp.208-215.

7 Full text of Joint Statement in Indonesian News, London, December 1975, pp.29-30.

8 Leifer, M., "Indonesia and the incorporation of East Timor", p.353, suggested that the invasion 'was almost certainly delayed for four days because of the impending brief visit to Jakarta by President Ford ... rais[ing] all kinds of speculation about the extent of consultation and even

December and was justified on the grounds that it was a response to requests from within East Timor to restore order there.[1] An Indonesian Government statement argued that it could not prevent 'Indonesian volunteers from helping their brothers in East Timor in their struggle to liberate themselves from Fretilin oppression'.[2] Such intervention by 'volunteers' attempted to resolve the issue of the political future of East Timor once and for all. Operation Seroja[3] saw 16 000 Indonesian troops invade with Indonesian victory envisioned in only a matter of days. A year later the nationalist resistance had fought thirty to forty thousand occupying troops to a stalemate.[4] According to the authoritative Australian journalist, Michael Richardson, by September Fretilin still controlled the bulk of the people and the territory.[5]

On the political side, the charade of 'integration at the

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collusion with the American President and his advisers on the imminent military enterprise'. Nevertheless, 'Ford was spared the embarrassment of being in Jakarta while the invasion of East Timor was proceeding'. Woolcott commented in an interview that Kissinger and Ford reputedly did not know about the impending invasion. Harris, personal Interview with Woolcott, Canberra, April 1988.

1 For a good account of the invasion see Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, pp.69 ff. Woolcott indicated that Indonesia's assessments (principally through General Yoga) reflected:
(i) a determination at the senior levels in Indonesia to stop the continued festering of what was considered to be a 'communist sore'; and
(ii) that none of the major powers would try to stop them, including America, China, Japan and the USSR.
Moreover, Woolcott indicated that while many of the member states of ASEAN encouraged Indonesia in its decision (particularly Malaysia), Singapore did not. Personal interview, Ibid.

2 An official communique issue in Jakarta, cited by the Age, 24 December 1975.

3 Operasi Komodo had been replaced by Operasi Seroja.

4 Accounts of the fighting indicate that the first wave of Indonesian paratroops (about 1 000 men) was followed in late December by up to another 15 000 troops. It has been suggested (Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, p.75) that between 30-35 000 Indonesian troops were in Timor by April 1976. To avoid UN condemnations, these troops continued to be officially referred to as 'volunteers'.

5 Richardson, Michael "FRETILIN's Alive and Kicking", the Age, 8 December 1976.

request of the people of East Timor', so reminiscent of the West New Guinea process, took about seven months. A provisional government, headed by Apodeti leaders and recognized by Indonesia, had been established in Dili on 17 December. By the middle of February 1976, it claimed that the island was under effective control. The rest was ceremony. On 31 May, an Indonesian-appointed provisional legislative met and voted in favour of integration, in the presence of journalists and diplomats flown in for 'a lightning three hour visit'.[1] This resolution was presented in a petition to President Suharto on 7 June, who accepted it as an expression of 'brothers joining with brothers'.[2]

This ceremonial process was extended with the despatch of an Indonesian mission 'comprising government officials, members of Parliament and representatives of functional groups... in a move to provide further window-dressing to this Wayang performance'.[3] Its task was to 'ascertain the wishes of the people of Timor', and was completed in good time for the formal admission of this 27th Province of Indonesia on 17 July 1976, a month before the anniversary of Indonesia's proclamation of independence. Of this whole situation, a stunned James Dunn[4] commented:

> In each case the delegations and a small accompanying group of diplomats - Australia and others declined to participate - were treated to a carefully orchestrated reception, which revealed absolutely nothing of the true situation in Timor, nor of the real feelings of the

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1 Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, p.83. Representatives of the United Nations were invited to attend (the UN Special Committee on Decolonization, the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council). Until this point, both the UNGA and UNSC had endorsed East Timor's right to self-determination and called, on 11 December 1978, for Indonesia's unilateral withdrawal. The UN, however, began to prove ineffective and any support there was for East Timorese independence dissipated due to intensive Indonesian lobbying within the UN See Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, pp.79-85, for a full account of this activity in the UN.

2 Williams, J., News Weekly, August 1976.

3 Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, p.83.

4 A former Consul in East Timor, James Dunn was head of the Foreign Affairs Section of the Australian Parliamentary Library, and was to become a central figure of dissent over Australia's East Timor policy (See Chapter 10).

people.[1]

Despite these events, Fretilin military activity continued on a significant scale until the end of the period under review,[2] compelling Dunn to again write:

> scant attention has been given to the humanitarian consequences of Indonesia's forced integration of East Timor which seems to be assuming the proportions of genocide. The case of East Timor presents, in relative terms, the most serious case of abuse of human rights, not to mention the right of self-determination, ever to have been inflicted on a people, in the crude guise of integration.[3]

Australia's Interest in East Timor

A Background

Before World War I, Australia's contacts with Portuguese Timor were of little substance, although since the early 1900s, the island of Timor has figured strongly, although intermittently, in Australian strategic perceptions. Early disquiet with rebellion on the island before World War I,[4] served to exacerbate ongoing reports (particularly after the collapse of the Portuguese Monarchy in 1910) of an interest on the part of external powers in annexing the island, and reflected a deep-seated concern that the island's occupation by a potentially hostile power was detrimental to Australia's security interests.[5] This view subsided and lay

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1 Dunn, J.S., The Timor Story, p.83. Dunn held firmly to his contempt of this whole episode throughout the next decade, and confirmed as much in personal interviews with the writer in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

2 See Kamm, "The Silent Suffering of East Timor", New York Times, 15 December 1981.

3 Dunn, J.S., "East Timor - Notes on the Humanitarium Situation", Parliament of Australia, Legislative Research Service, Foreign Affairs Group, September 1979.

4 The rebellion, instigated by the powerful Timorese liuri trading class against Portuguese rule, raged for some two years. It was reported in the Melbourne Argus (12 December 1912), which anxiously concluded that the trouble in Timor should be of particular interest to all Australians because '...Port Dili, the scene of the outrages, is closer to Port Darwin than Hobart is to Melbourne'.

5 At different times, the Germans, the Japanese and the Dutch were reported to have had territorial designs on the colony. Hastings, P., "The Timor Problem II: Some Australian

dormant until the late 1930s when Australia became wary of Japanese activities and intentions in the colony. By the Second World War, and for some years after, the island had resumed significant strategic importance in the context of Australia's defence. In a major speech on international affairs[1] to the House of Representatives in 1943, the Labor Minister for External Affairs, Dr H.V. Evatt indicated:

> As a result of the war, Australia must show a particular interest in the ... islands and territories that lie close to our shores. From the point of view of defence, trade and transport, most of them can be fairly described as coming within an extended Australian zone... Timor, part of which is Portuguese and part Dutch, was of importance to the overseas air service between Australia and Europe. This island, in enemy hands, is a constant threat to Australia. If properly placed within the zone of Australian security, it would become a bastion of our defence. In Portuguese Timor we appointed a special Australian representative in 1941. We also took all practical steps to assist its people... When Portuguese Timor was practically defenseless and the Japanese invasion of this neutral territory was imminent... The epic stand of our troops in the Timor hills will always be a source of legitimate pride to all Australians.[2]

Although Evatt's security zone was never realized nor a system of regional cooperation established in this area,[3] Australian consular representation on the island remained until 1971. In the meantime, Timor submerged once again to lay idle beneath the Australian consciousness. Thus:

> Australian attitudes had gone full circle ... In 1941 Timor was regarded as being so vital to the country's defence that Australian troops actually engaged in an act of invasion, inevitably forcing the Timorese to endure the horrors of war and occupation ...[however]... because of British pressures and Portuguese suspicions, ambitious plans for a special postwar relationship never got off the ground. No priorities emerged ... as far as the policy-makers were concerned [and]... the East Timor colony drifted back to the obscurity of the last century.[4]

Attitudes, 1903-1941", Australian Outlook, Vol.29, August 1975, pp.183-185.

1 CPD, H.R., Vol.176, pp.567-579, 14 October 1943.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.176, p.573, 14 October 1943.

3 This function was provided in the zone east of New Guinea by the South Pacific Commission.

4 Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.136.

But more than this, in the 1950s and 1960s, the Australian Government was to show little interest in the Timorese people themselves and their socio-economic well-being under Portuguese control.

In 1963, however, conflicting concern had emerged within the Australian Labor Party more broadly over the right of colonies to self-determination. Timor figured prominently in the Party's anti-colonial calls, with its deputy leader, E.G. Whitlam, making a statement that was to return to haunt him just over a decade later:

> Eastern Timor must appear as an anachronism to every country in the world except Portugal... we would not have a supporter in the world if we backed the Portuguese... they must be told in no uncertain terms that the standard of living must be rapidly raised, and the rights of self-determination fully granted... through the UN. We must act quickly to meet this problem ... and not become bogged down in another futile argument[1] over sovereignty.[2]

This view was ALP Conference policy for the next three years, although, due to an increasing interest in Vietnam, it lapsed at the 1966 Federal Conference. Consequently, the ALP came to power in 1972 with no policy on East Timor. In the meantime, the Liberal government continued to show little interest in the colony. Indeed, due to increasing international pressure on Portugal's colonial policies (as well as the fact that Australia opened a mission in Lisbon), the Australian Government closed its Consulate in 1971, and began supporting UN resolutions, initiated in the mid-1960s, that called for the self-determination of Portuguese colonial territories. Jolliffe explained:

> This break with Liberal precedent became the established pattern after Labor came to power. However, although Labor publicly pursued a vigorous anti-colonial policy in the UN, Timor soon emerged as an exception to the rule.[3]

The potential for Portuguese Timor to expose this contradiction in the new Australian Labor government's foreign policy was realized in 1973 when press and community groups voiced criticism of Australia's economic links with the colony, which were it was

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[1] A reference to 'the lessons of West New Guinea'.

[2] The Roy Milne Memorial Lecture, given in Adelaide 1963; quoted in Hill, H., The Timor Story, p.3 and Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.134.

[3] Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.245.

argued in contravention of the UN's stand. In response, Senator Don Willesee indicated that as far as the Labor government was concerned these UN resolutions did not refer to Portuguese Timor, only to Portugal's African colonies.[1]

This distinction, reflecting a 'co-existence of principled attitudes abroad and expediency closer to home',[2] was maintained by Willesee in a government response to the 1974 coup in Portugal when, in a reference to its implications for Portugal's overseas territories, he ignored the Portuguese colony of Timor. Moreover, the government's 'strong opposition to the perpetuation of unrepresentative colonial minority regimes'[3] seemed only to focus on southern Africa. This was the only statement issued in the Foreign Minister's name until 30 October 1975,[4] twelve days before the Whitlam government lost power. Meanwhile, the enunciation of Australia's Timor policy fell to other spokespersons, namely Whitlam and W. Morrison, but not before Whitlam made his controversial visit to Jakarta in September 1974. While not intended to achieve spectacular and widely publicized results, Whitlam's arrival in Indonesia came, as we noted earlier, at a critical stage in the development of Indonesia's official attitude towards Portuguese Timor, and it was the security interest of Indonesia, not Australia, that were to influence the shape of the

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1 CPD, Senate, S.56, 23 May 1973, pp.1824-1825.

2 Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.245.

3 AFAR, April 1974, p.288.

4 Foreign Minister Willesee made a Ministerial Statement to the Parliament on 30 October 1975 (CPD, H.R., Vol.66, pp.1609-1610, 30 October 1975). Up until that time only one other Ministerial Statement was made in the Parliament, and that was by Senator Wriedt on behalf of the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs (Whitlam). In the period 29 April 1974 until 30 October 1975, over thirty Questions were asked in the Senate on matters relating to the Portuguese/East Timor situation. Senator Wriedt fielded most of these questions up until 30 September. On that day Senator Sir Magnus Cormack was critical of the government's neglect in explaining its foreign policy (it had not done so since May 1973) and of Willesee, specifically, for using the 'foreign policy device of getting an anonymous spokesperson to answer on his behalf' (CPD, Senate, S.65, 30 September 1975, p.776). Willesee subsequently responded to all of the remaining Questions, all in October, prior to his 30 October 1975 statement.

Labor Government's Timor policy.

The Whitlam-Suharto Talks in Wonosobo, September 1974

It would be tempting to conclude that the Wonosobo talks brought about the change at that time in Indonesia's attitude towards East Timor. However, as it was argued here, as well as forcefully elsewhere[1], Indonesia's assessment that its interests would not be served if the territory sought its independence was due to developments within Portugal, its former colony and to divisions within Indonesia's ruling circles. Nevertheless, this meeting did lay the foundations for future understanding between Australia and Indonesia on East Timor, for:

> Whitlam told Suharto he thought the best solution would be for East Timor to join Indonesia, adding with somewhat less emphasis that the wishes of the Timorese should be respected and that public reaction in Australia would be hostile if Indonesia used force.[2]

An examination of what was concluded at this meeting is of particular interest not so much to draw attention to the options available to Whitlam, but to highlight the undercurrents of opinion within the bureaucracy. This gave rise to an early dilemma over what Australia's options were in any formulation of an East Timor policy.

Although the theme of Whitlam's attitude toward the East Timor question was one of 'non-involvement', Australia was compelled by mid-1974 to formulate a policy on East Timor simply because developments in the territory at this time did not 'permit Canberra a totally detached attitude'.[3] However, this process was confounded by two contradictory notions: the ALP's traditional commitment to the process of self-determination and the implications to the region of a potentially unstable, economically fragile independent East Timor. Exacerbating this was Indonesia's hardening attitude and Whitlam's firm perception of Indonesia as a

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1 Hill, H., The Timor Story, p.8; Richardson, Michael, National Times, July 19-24, 1976, pp.11-12. See also Utrecht, E., "United States of Indonesia. The Pentagon and the Generals", Arena, No.42, 1976, p.77 ff.

2 McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.195.

3 Albinski, H.S., Australian External Policy Under Labor, p.106.

key nation in the region. As Whitlam had argued within weeks of the 1972 election:

> It goes without saying that the Number One [sic] objective of my government is to strengthen relations with Indonesia... one of the crucial factors which will determine the future of the South-West Pacific... and largely determine the future of the East Indian Ocean area for the rest of this century.[1]

It followed then that whatever the nature of Indonesia's disputes with other States in the region, with outside powers, or even with Australia, the latter:

> would establish a diplomatic framework in which it would be agreed, on both sides, that the long-term relationship should be maintained and strengthened despite the effects of particular disputes.[2]

Two other aspects of Whitlam's approach to Indonesia were embodied in his view of, and Australian attitudes towards, Southeast Asia generally. The first, according to Jolliffe, embraced two central themes: 'that trade was a more constructive tool in Southeast Asia than defence pacts... and that Indonesia and other of the ASEAN countries presented ripe fields for Australian investments, which should be exploited'.[3] The second reflected:

> his long-standing concern that ... disputes [such as Timor] ... could lead to a resurgence among Australians of the Asian threat preoccupation, imbued with racist overtones, which had in the 1950s and 1960s blighted the constructive development of Australia's relations with Asian countries....[4]

Thus, the maintenance of the bilateral relationship was the main, if not only, consideration in policy, even when Australian and Indonesian views were in conflict on particular issues. As the Portuguese Empire, including East Timor, began to collapse, relating these policy objectives to the new situation became an increasingly important concern for Whitlam.

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1 Whitlam, E.G., Broadcast on Radio Australia, 22 December 1972, "A Selection of Statements on Foreign Affairs by the Australian Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Whitlam, and the Special Minister of State, Senator Willesee". Department of Foreign Affairs, Canberra, 8 August 1973.

2 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", Australian Outlook, Vol.30, No.2, 1976, p.201.

3 Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.246.

4 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.203.

This task, however, seemed to have been completed in a single stroke when, on 5 September 1974, an Australian Foreign Affairs official announced to journalists that during the Whitlam-Suharto talks the Australian Prime Minister had said:

> an independent Timor would be an unviable state and a potential threat to the area.

Nevertheless, the Prime Minister was thought:

> to have made clear that the people of the colony should have the ultimate decision on this future.[1]

The first statement formed the basis of Australia's East Timor policy[2] for the remainder of the Whitlam government's tenure of office, and became a catalyst for the widening public debate on its inherent dilemma. It also ushered in a subtle redirection in Indonesia's policy,[3] publicly enunciated the following week when the Indonesian Home Affairs Minister said that his government was prepared to accept the Portuguese half of Timor island if that was the real wish of the East Timor people. Thus, there was a convergence of policies on what now was becoming known as 'the Timor problem'.[4] Yet, notwithstanding this framework of assumptions, and the timing in its enunciation, some found these precipitate developments perplexing. Peter Hastings, for example, asked 'why in the name of all that is cautious, the unseemingly

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1 Quoted in Hastings, P., "Whitlam treads dangerous ground on Timor", the Sydney Morning Herald, 16 September 1974. See also the Canberra Times, 9 September 1974.

2 Morrison first put the attitude and policy of the government on Portuguese Timor in October 1974 when, in response to criticism of the government's policy on self-determination from Peacock, he said they were 'based on the principles of the United Nations and Australia's support for the right of self-determination for all colonial people ... if the people of Portuguese Timor wish to associate ... with Indonesia, Australia would welcome this provided ... the decision were based on an internationally accepted act of self-determination. In short, the Government believes that the Timorese people should be allowed to proceed deliberately towards a decision about their own future...' (CPD, H.R., Vol.91, p.3046, 30 October 1974).

3 The Indonesian Government's only statement of policy up until the meeting was the letter, from Malik, which Horta brought back with him from Jakarta in June 1974.

4 Statement from the Indonesian Home Affairs Minister, General Amir Machmud. Quoted in Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.200. See also The National Times, 19-24 July 1975.

public haste to hand Portuguese Timor to the Indonesians?'[1]

Interpretations vary as to why Whitlam acted with such immediacy, with Viviani providing perhaps the most plausible analysis. First, she focused on Whitlam's dislike of small states and messy situations (the 'Balkanisation of Southeast Asia'[2] syndrome), and his close personal contact with President Suharto. Second, she considered 'institutional reasons' were fundamental -- specifically, the influence on Whitlam of the so-called 'Indonesian Lobby'[3] in the Department of Foreign Affairs.[4] Alternatively, Graham Freudenberg,[5] writing in 1977, principally on former Labor leader Calwell's conduct in relation to the messy West New Guinea issue in the early 1960s, offered a different dimension:

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 September 1974.

2 Viviani, N., "Australians and the East Timor Issue", p.203.

3 Herb Feith referred to such a 'lobby' group in a submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, April 1982. Feith's depiction of the term was broader and included 'Indonesian watchers and former Indonesian watchers in other government departments and among service officers, and people of similar background in the academic and journalistic worlds'. More interestingly, however, he saw this 'group is held together by a common outlook and ethos rather than material interests. Its members' outlook is a coherent one [they] ... have a genuine affection for Indonesia and its people. And their concern to combat racism in Australia is idealistic'. Feith considered that such views first took shape in the early 1960s when Sukarno was seen as a disaster and Suharto's accession to the Presidency as a 'Godsend' (H. Feith, Submission to the Secretary, Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, Parliament House, Canberra, 2 April 1982, p.7 (copy of letter with the writer)).

4 Viviani, N.,"Australians and the East Timor Issue", p.201. Dr Viviani, however, argues that although the Department of Foreign Affairs came down on the side of the integration proposal, it was incorrect to argue -- as some had done in early 1976 -- that the department dominated Australia's policy towards East Timor. She also qualified the high level of influence given by these interpretations to Furlonger and Woolcott -- respectively Ambassadors to Indonesia 1971-74, and 1974-76 -- whose views, Dr. Viviani suggested, were dominated by Whitlam. Dr. Viviani still maintains this argument. Harris, personal interview with Viviani, September 1986.

5 From 1961 to 1966, Freudenberg was Press Secretary to Calwell, and from 1967 to 1975 on Whitlam's staff, first as Press Secretary (1967-72) and then as Special Adviser (1972-75).

> Sukarno had stepped up the pressure on West New Guinea to shore up his crumbling position at home; Calwell blundered into the controversy for a political advantage at home; Menzies used the issue to recover from his own near defeat at home. Within a year, Sukarno was to achieve incorporation of West New Guinea; over the next two years, Menzies steadily restored his supremacy; Calwell remained the Labor leader for four more years, but his decline from that day was deep, accelerating and irreversible.
>
> Thirteen years later in 1975, there was to be an echo of this strange affair. The Calwell catastrophe would deeply affect the attitude of Whitlam, as Prime Minister, to the problem posed by Indonesia's desire to incorporate East Timor. Whitlam, as Prime Minster, was determined never again to have a bar of the humbug humiliation and hypocrisy which had occurred over West Irian.[1]

Alan Renouf, the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs at the time, put forward similar explanations. However, he was at odds with Viviani's assertion that such a lobby prevailed in the formulation of Australia's East Timor policy. Renouf stressed that in a brief given to Whitlam on the eve of the Wonosobo talks, the department analysed the prospect of East Timor's integration with Indonesia and 'concluded that if this were to happen through self-determination, slow and careful political development under Portugal would be best.'[2] However, Renouf argues that Whitlam chose to ignore this advice in his discussions with Suharto, with the Australian Prime Minister preferring to stress, 'integration of East Timor but only through self-determination.'[3] In taking such a

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1 Freudenberg, G., A Certain Grandeur, p.18.

2 Renouf, Alan, The Frightened Country, p.442. While indicating that his role in determining the substance and direction of Australia's policy making on Indonesia was exaggerated, Woolcott put the view that a former Ambassador to Indonesia, Furlonger was, in 1972, the main architect of Australia's policy of East Timor's integration into the Indonesia State when the issue of decolonization was to be addressed. In the meantime, according to Woolcott, the department's Executive felt that it could not manipulate such a process and that it would have to take its natural course. In any event, self-determination would have to be kept to the fore. Harris, personal interview with Woolcott, Canberra, April 1988.

3 Ibid., p.443. According to Woolcott, Whitlam was working towards Indonesia and Portugal getting together with a view to preparing the East Timorese people for an act of self-determination within a five year (minimum) time framework. More to the point, Whitlam had not addressed the issue of

position, Whitlam sought to merge two approaches -- integration and self-determination.

This policy position was subsequently re-phrased by the Department of Foreign Affairs to emphasize that Australia's main concern was with self-determination in East Timor but that:

> voluntary union with Indonesia through an internationally acceptable act of self-determination would not serve the objectives of decolonization and regional stability.[1]

For its part, the Department of Defence put forward an alternative view as a basis for policy. Analysts dealing with strategic planning and intelligence continued to see Timor as an important buffer and potential defensive outpost, with the Second World War providing the dramatic precedent. In fact, according to Hugh Armfield of the Age newspaper in Melbourne, some circles in the department were:

> strongly opposed to Timor becoming associated with Indonesia. They would prefer to see it independent... they point to Portuguese Timor's closeness to Australia and to the fact that it was used by the Japanese in the last war for reconnaissance flights over Australia and could again be of strong strategic importance... they also believe that Indonesia is not as stable as other people (particularly Foreign Affairs) think and that there is a possibility of a government hostile to Australia emerging in Jakarta, which would make Portuguese Timor of vital importance. So they favour the colony being independent or in some way strongly linked with Australia.[2]

In any event, while Whitlam's East Timor policy claimed that the Australian Government could only support a proper act of self-determination, it prejudged the outcome of such a process by stressing that integration was the most acceptable option, which was by this time in keeping with Indonesia's preferred objective -- a factor that, notwithstanding Renouf's contention, would not have been lost on key influential officials in the Australian foreign policy-making process.[3]

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a choice between incorporation without such an act of self-determination (due to the circumstances such as those that arose) or another route.

[1] Ibid., p.444.

[2] The Age, 13 September 1974.

[3] In particular, the Australian Ambassador in Jakarta and the Head of the Indonesian Section within the Department of Foreign Affairs in Canberra.

While Australia's East Timor policy came under scrutiny from both the press and the Parliament,[1] Whitlam was unmoved. However, it became increasingly clear over the next five months that the Australian Government had reached a point where -- having decided the best possible option for East Timor was its integration with Indonesia -- it needed to persuade domestic and international opinion of the merit of such a solution. Such a task become particularly difficult during these months because it was emerging that Indonesia 'was preparing for a situation where some of her leaders assessed she might have to use force in East Timor.'[2]

Indonesian Military Intervention : Early Australian Assessments

In the meantime, increasing emphasis was being placed on such a likelihood by the Department of Foreign Affairs in Canberra. Within months of the Wonosobo talks in September 1974, a working paper had been drawn up by the department and it became the basis of an abortive Australian attempt to prevent Indonesian military intervention in East Timor. The paper was a response to assessments from the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, intelligence and other sources, that Indonesia was prepared to use force if necessary to prevent East Timor from emerging as a sovereign State, and it canvassed the option of independence for the former colony. By early March 1975, this draft had been expanded into a secret working paper and it had the endorsement of Foreign Affairs

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1 See Chapter Eight and Nine.

2 Renouf, A., The Frightened Country, p.444. Dr. Viviani confirmed that official assessments were filtering through to Canberra following Whitlam's return from Indonesia in September 1974, that Jakarta was now opposed to independence for East Timor. Further, that intelligence assessments were directing the Department of Foreign Affairs to establish a clear understanding that Indonesia was prepared to use force to prevent this. Harris, personal interview with Viviani, September, 1986.

Gregory Clark, a member of Whitlam's staff wrote in 1976 that Indonesia drew up the invasion plan (Operasi Komodo) immediately after Whitlam and Suharto met in September 1974. National Times, 22-27 March 1976, p.12. In hindsight, and likely to have been confirmed by intelligence assessments referred to by Viviani, some of its manifestations appeared at this time, including financial aid to Apodeti, and the propaganda broadcasts into East Timor from Kupang, West Timor.

Minister Willesee who, by this stage, had expressed his concerns in what he believed was 'the most direct and critical action' relating to developments in East Timor during 'two meetings with Adam Malik, the first in New York and the second in New Delhi.'[1]

This paper -- which later formed the basis of a personal letter, carried by Ambassador Woolcott, from Whitlam to Suharto following the February invasion scare (see below) -- had two major themes. The first warned of possible consequences of an Indonesian use of force, or the threat of force, in dealing with the situation in Portuguese Timor. Repercussions included a deterioration of relations with Australia, international criticism, and unrest and resentment in the region. The second theme of the paper outlined measures for 'containing' the Timor problem. Unlike the brief Whitlam was given before his talks with Suharto in Wonosobo, the paper was based on the premise that independence would be the eventual outcome[2] -- a reasonable assumption at this time because Fretilin and UDT had formed their coalition in order to carry the territory through self-government towards independence within ten years. Thus, with East Timorese independence a likely prospect, Australian policy, endorsed by Foreign Minister Willesee, was aimed at making the territory a client state of its neighbours, particularly Australia and Indonesia.[3]

The major strategy here included that the territory of East Timor be neutralized,[4] by linking it with the other non-communist

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1 Harris, correspondence with D. Willesee, Perth, November 1986. On both occasions Willesee was leader of delegations to, respectively, the general debates of the 29th United Nations General Assembly, in early October 1974 (AFAR, Vol.45., No.10., October 1974, p.713), and the 31st Session of the ESCAP Commission, in New Delhi, on 25 February - 7 March 1975 (AFAR, Vol.46., No.4., April 1975, p.202).

2 Hastings suggested that Whitlam received a 'very unsophisticated' briefing from the Department of Foreign Affairs prior to the first meeting (Sydney Morning Herald, 19 November, 1974).

3 For a broader analysis of this concept, see Richardson, Michael, the National Times, 19-24 July 1976, p.9.

4 The paper proposed that Australia and Indonesia work together, using constructive influence to ensure that an independent East Timor would have its essential contacts with non-Communist nations in the immediate area, not with left-wing Portuguese colonies in Africa or with communist countries.

nations of the region -- Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines -- and making it dependent on these States for aid, trade and other development needs. Fundamental to this idea was a joint aid package which, it was intended, would be made up initially of three programmes -- food, foreign training for Timorese and health. The key to the development of this 'satellite state' strategy was for Indonesia and Australia to work closely with the Portuguese administration and to extend friendship to the Fretilin and UDT parties. All that remained was the opportunity for Australia to present these alternative proposals.

The Invasion Scare and its Aftermath

By early 1975, two events had propelled policy-making circles in Canberra headlong into their first major crisis in the relationship since the Sukarno period. First, in the merger between Fretilin and UDT lay the potential collapse of Australia's East Timor policy, particularly if it was an indication that the major political force in the territory now tended towards independence. Second, a report in the Sydney Morning Herald in February by Peter Hastings of an impending Indonesian invasion of East Timor[1] provoked a major reaction within the Australian community.[2] Together, these developments raised serious doubts about the sustainability of the preferred option of integration.

The Foreign Affairs and Defence establishments were immediate in their responses. The former, prodded by an anxious embassy in Jakarta,[3] were distressed that relations 'so assiduously cultivated by a generation of Australian diplomats',[4] were in prospect of breaking down. The latter considered an invasion would erode recent assessments that Australia's strategic environment was benign, and place Australia's defence aid programme with Indonesia

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1 See the Sydney Morning Herald, 21 February 1975, the Age, 22 February 1975. Nicol notes that the source of Hasting's article was confidential material obtained from an officer within the Joint Intelligence Organization in the Department of Defence. Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.284.

2 This reaction is examined in more detail in the following three chapters.

3 Harris, personal interview with K.C.O. Shann, Canberra, November 1980.

4 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.221.

in jeopardy, particularly if these developments sparked off public debate.[1]

Against this background the government's response to the reports of an impending invasion was two-fold. Its public response took the form of a policy statement, and it was enunciated during, and probably only due to, the urgency debate mounted in the House of Representatives by Peacock on 25 February 1975. Delivered by Morrison,[2] and differing in degree from Whitlam's stance, the statement put the view that Australia 'must support a measured and deliberate process of decolonization in Portuguese Timor through arrangements leading to an internationally acceptable act of self-determination'.[3] At another level, Whitlam employed more discrete diplomatic channels and wrote to Suharto with the proposal that, with UN approval, Indonesia, Portugal and Australia cooperate to underwrite East Timor's independence (through self-determination) by means of the provision of the joint aid package. Whitlam also expressed the view that if the Timorese chose independence, the territory would in practice, finally, become a client state of Indonesia.[4] The letter, as noted earlier, also warned against the use of force to take over Timor. While Indonesia rejected the proposal when the two leaders met for a second series of talks in Townsville (Australia), between 3-5 April 1975, Whitlam received Suharto's personal assurance that force would not be used.

By all accounts, Whitlam's stance on the East Timor question at the talks had not changed. He continued to emphasize 'that there should be no departure from an internationally acceptable act of self-determination'.[5] It has been well argued, however, that because the Australian Prime Minister continued to believe the territory's integration with Indonesia was the preferable option, he 'was less scrupulous in his concern about the means'.[6] Thus,

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1 Ibid., p.210.

2 The Minister for Science.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.97, p.644, 25 February 1975. This debate is examined more closely in Chapter Nine.

4 Renouf, A., The Frightened Country, p.445.

5 Ibid., p.445.

6 Richardson, M., National Times, 19 July 1976.

while Whitlam sought and received Indonesia's undertaking that it would not use force in the former colony, he refrained from criticizing Indonesia's conduct in East Timor at the time.[1] As we noted earlier, by April 1975, an important strand of Indonesia's strategy in East Timor -- and a matter on which Whitlam would have been fully and reliably informed -- was its propaganda campaign and the subversive activities of Operasi Komodo which, together, were being directed towards destabilizing the political situation in the territory.

Australian Domestic Political Pressures

In the meantime, whether it was due to dissatisfaction with this policy, or concern over whether the government meant it,[2] in March 1975, a delegation of Labor Party Members from the Caucus Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee visited East Timor to assess the prospects for such a process. Although hosted ostensibly by Fretilin people, the delegation had meetings with other East Timorese leaders, and had the opportunity to witness the relative support for each party at mass demonstrations staged to coincide with their visit. It also had talks with the Portuguese Governor who, in what would be a real test of the depth of Australia's intentions, requested the Australian Government to reopen its consulate in Dili. On their return, the delegation briefed both Willesee and Foreign Affairs officials and urged that serious consideration be given to such a request. However, the decision

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1 Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, p.152.

2 There was, by now, a lack of cohesion in support of a policy that not only expressed a preference for integration but also supported the right of the East Timorese to self-determination. Its schizophrenic nature seemed to assure its acceptance from all quarters, by the Indonesians for the purposes of reinforcing their distinct movements towards incorporation, and at home, where the concern of Ministers such as Willesee and, increasingly, Morrison and Hurford (CPD, H.R., V.91, p.3049, 30 October 1974), was deepening over the welfare of the Timorese and their future. In this regard, Willesee in particular was anxious; more so, it appears than was Whitlam (Harris, personal interview with Viviani, September 1986). This division within the Labor leadership found parallels in the Liberal party leadership, with Peacock embracing a view similar in substance to Willesee's, while Fraser, particularly after the 1975 election, pursued the Foreign Affairs line of integration (See the Age, 13 October 1976 and 7 December 1976).

rested with Whitlam, who in rejecting it stated that 'to reopen it now could be misinterpreted. Political interests in Portuguese Timor could seek to use our presence to involve us to an extent which I do not feel would be appropriate for Australia'.[1] This was arguable. In view of the argument that developments in Timor had little potential to influence regional affairs, the reopening of the consulate would have had only a limited effect. Yet, if developments in the colony took a turn for the worse, Australia would not have been able to avoid any kind of involvement. Thus, a presence may have given the Australian Government the capacity to perhaps influence the actions of the political groups in Timor and those observing them from outside, especially Indonesia. To have had 'a man on the ground' would have overcome the confusion that surrounded these, now inevitable, developments and he would have perhaps offered less conflicting advice on their implications.[2] On another level, Australia could have given and administered badly needed humanitarian assistance through such a mission.[3]

These arguments reflected tangible Australian interests and were canvassed persistently by the Australian press.[4] But nothing was done by Whitlam, even following the admission by Woolcott in March 1975 that the closing of the consulate 'might have been a mistake'.[5] As the Timor crisis deepened, it was becoming clear that Whitlam had resolved to discourage any kind of Australian

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1 The Australian, 24 March 1975.

2 These sentiments were expressed by Dunn in a personal interview with the author, November 1981, and by Fry, November 1981. Also held to be important by Hastings, discussion with author, November 1981.

3 While it is not clear who exactly decided that the consulate should not be re-opened, Viviani argued that to have done so, and to have instituted an aid program would only have, 'arouse[d] Indonesian suspicions as to Australia's intentions and particularly its support of Indonesian policy, and a re-opened consulate could become the focus of pressure by Timorese parties' (Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.211).

4 See, for example, the Australian, 21 March 1975, 24 March 1975, 4 April 1975; the Sydney Morning Herald, 25 February 1975, 25 March 1975, 7 April 1975.

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 4 March 1975.

presence in the territory. In all probability, this centred on his increasing awareness of Indonesia's subversive activities in East Timor and his concern that Australia could become irreversibly enmeshed. Thus, following his talks with Suharto in Townsville, the need to avoid offending or provoking the Indonesian Government over the East Timor question emerged as the central plank of Whitlam's policy. In the circumstances, particularly following the failure of the Macau conference in June 1975 -- which was to have been a key element in the 'negotiations strategy' being pursued through the first half of 1975 by both the Indonesian and Australian Governments -- it would be less than fair to the Australian Government to suggest it had any other credible policy options. As far as Whitlam was concerned, Australia had no major strategic or political interest in whether East Timor was independent or integrated with Indonesia but it did have an important national interest in ensuring that it would not be drawn into a permanently hostile relationship with Indonesia.

In the meantime, growing links between Australian politicians and the Timorese (mainly Fretilin):

> encouraged the latter to think, not unreasonably in the circumstances, that the Australian Government could be brought to shift its stance away from preferring integration to supporting independence. A sober judgement in Australia would have seen this as most unlikely. In addition, there seems little doubt that some Australians urged the Timorese to go for independence, without considering the costs of this sufficiently and with little prospect of converting their own Government to this view.[1]

In this context, it appeared that Peacock, the Liberal Party spokesperson on Foreign Affairs, had been taking a far greater interest in the Timor situation than any Labor Minister. He went as far as to meet with Horta, extending to him a good deal of encouragement. This, while maintaining a stand in opposition to the government's policy on Timor,[2] gained him firm political ground as did the latter for the Country Party's Ian Sinclair,[3] although the essential tenets of their own Timor policy were not

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[1] Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.211.

[2] See, for example, CPD, H.R., Vol.93, pp.640-643, 25 February 1975.

[3] The Deputy Leader of the Country Party, Ibid., pp.645-647.

substantially different to those of the government. Peacock, in particular, never extended support for the right of the Timorese to independence, only self-determination. However, it can be argued that his actions may have created the impression in the minds of the Timorese that a Liberal-Country Party government would be more favourable in its assessments of their aspirations for independence than the Whitlam government -- an important point in view of subsequent political developments in Australia.

The UDT coup in August 1975, and the ensuing public debate within Australia, impelled the Australian Government to issue a further statement. With Ambassador Woolcott counselling restraint,[1] and notwithstanding a Portuguese request that Australia convene a meeting of the warring parties, Whitlam explicitly rejected any Australian involvement, as it:

> Could lead to a situation where Australia was exercising a quasi-colonial role in Portuguese Timor... we, for our part, understand Indonesia's concern that the territory should not be allowed to become a source of instability... Indonesia's concern about the situation has now led her to offer, if Portugal so requests, to assist in restoring order there... none of the three political groups in the territory has shown any genuine willingness to work with the others.[2]

Thus, although Australia was not a 'party principal' to the East Timor question (and its increasingly dire implications), Whitlam was, in an effort not to prejudice Australia's relationship with Indonesia, prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to maintain Australia's passive role.

Members of the ALP Caucus Foreign Affairs Committee, which had been to Timor in March were incensed by this speech and wrote a letter to Whitlam accusing him of being unrealistic in expecting Portugal to re-exert control. They argued that Australia, now respected by all of the parties to the conflict, would be in a good

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1 Dunn, James, Timor. A People Betrayed, pp.188-190.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.96, p.493, 26 August 1975. Jim Dunn told the author that Whitlam was instrumental in stopping (him) accompanying a representative of the International Red Cross into East Timor at the time of the fighting. Whitlam wanted to close off any avenue that would lead to any Australian involvement (official and, if possible, unofficial). Harris, personal interview with Dunn, Canberra, November 1981.

position to mediate.[1] In the House of Representatives late that afternoon, Peacock criticized Whitlam's statement because it was 'not only bereft of idealism, but ... also completely denuded of realism', and argued that Australia had two policies that were mutually exclusive: one of self-determination for the Timorese, and the other a policy of allowing for the integration of the Timorese people into Indonesia.[2] Moreover, Peacock for the first time advocated a role for ASEAN and the UN which drew Whitlam later to argue, of the former, 'Nothing... would lead us to believe that these countries considered that they could play a useful role at this stage'. Of the latter, he ruled out any suggestion of a UN role, preferring to suggest that 'Portugal should maintain its responsibilities to the territory'.[3] Peacock also reaffirmed his belief that Australia should reopen its consulate in Dili.

These arguments gave rise to an intense debate in the Australian Parliament, fuelled by questions from Anthony and Fraser who, displaying sympathy with the Indonesian line, portrayed events in East Timor as an ideological power struggle and asked Whitlam whether he was going to accept, 'so close to Australia', a situation in which a communist Fretilin took over Timor.[4] However, Whitlam refused to be baited, and signalling the worst of all possible outcomes concluded that:

> The Indonesian Government has expressed its willingness to assist... The Indonesian Consul in Dili has been under great pressure, remaining behind after the departure of the Portuguese. The last of three appeals addressed this week by the Portuguese Government to the Secretary-General of the United Nations has spoken of the need for international intervention to effect a ceasefire. The Indonesian Government, which over the past year has expressed repeatedly its intention not to intervene in Timor, may thus be turned to as the only force capable of restoring calm in the territory.[5]

It has been argued that had Indonesia intervened at this time, as

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1 The Age, 28 August 1975.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.96, p.510, 26 August 1975. See also Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.218.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.96, p.565, 27 August 1975.

4 Anthony, CPD, H.R., Vol.96, p.685, 28 August 1975 and Fraser, Ibid., p.689, 28 August 1975. See also Chapter 9.

5 CPD, H.R., Vol.96, p.688, 28 August 1975.

seemed to be Whitlam's public wish,[1] much of the outrage in public opinion that erupted when Indonesia eventually did invade (both in Australia and abroad), would not have arisen.[2] As it turned out, Indonesia's decision to wait (essentially Suharto's,[3] under increasing pressure from 'hawks' in Jakarta), based on the calculation that Indonesian intervention would be made easier if the fighting was to run its natural course, proved to be an incorrect one.

Notwithstanding this curious orientation of events, this exchange in the Parliament ushered in a period in which the government came under intense public pressure and criticism,[4] with public anger and criticism directed also towards the Indonesians. This put the Department of Foreign Affairs, particularly, under enormous pressures -- from Indonesian officials and Australian public opinion -- and some disagreement emerged. In essence, Australia's dual policy of integration and self-determination at the Ministerial level was creating schisms within the Department of Foreign Affairs, with officers on the Indonesian desk and others with a background in Portuguese and African affairs also pursuing, respectively, integration and a greater commitment to the notion of self-determination. However:

> The overall effect was to take no initiatives, to do whatever was done as secretly as possible and to discourage public debate. Any government statements on Timor always

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1 McDonald has argued that Whitlam sent Suharto 'a private message saying that nothing he said earlier should be interpreted as a veto on Indonesian action in the changed circumstances'. McDonald, H., Suharto's Indonesia, p.207.

2 Richardson, Michael, The National Times, July 19-24, 1976, p.14.

3 Harris personal interview with Woolcott, Canberra, April 1988. Mr Woolcott also indicated that it was his role in the pre-invasion period to, through representations, 'restrain' Indonesia (which angered the Indonesians). Yet, he also indicated that the bases of his representations were the Embassy's assessments of the circumstances at the time, including:
(i) Portugal's abdication of their colony;
(ii) the geostrategic situation concerning East Timor; and
(iii) arms being shipped from Mozambique.
These factors, according to Woolcott, made it 'inevitable' that Indonesia would invade. See also Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, pp.262-263.

4 See below.

> referred to Indonesia's interests above those of the people of East Timor, although there was always token references to 'self-determination' - a very vague concept. Australia always maintained it was not a party principal in Timor, while knowing well that whatever Australia did would be crucial.[1]

This pusillanimous attitude embittered Willesee, who found respite in absences from the country on Foreign Ministry business.[2] Willesee's inclination was to make a stronger public commitment to the principle of self-determination but he was severely handicapped by the presence and attitude of Whitlam. However, with increasing reports of Indonesian military activities in East Timor in late September, and the subsequent deaths of the five journalists at Balibo on 18 October, the extent and consequences of Whitlam's policy were brought realistically, and tragically home to his Foreign Affairs Minister,[3] and they found powerful expression in his only statement on East Timor, on 30 October 1975, to the Australian Parliament.[4]

Yet, Australia knew that the Indonesian troops were active in East Timor by October 1975, at least two months before the full-scale invasion. It has been suggested that this information came from 'special briefings' given by well-placed Indonesians, the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, Australian intelligence and other non-Indonesian sources.[5] The Whitlam government's reticence about the ugly side of Indonesia's incorporation programme was well illustrated by a well-informed Australian journalist, Bruce Juddery, who reported that the ministerial statement of October

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1 Hill, H., The Timor Story, p.12.

2 Harris, personal interview with Viviani, September 1986.

3 Willesee was deeply shocked by the deaths of the journalists because, as he put it to the author, each one of his own five children was involved in journalism, one way or another.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.65, pp.1609-1610. This statement also ended a period -- which began with Sir Magnus Cormack's criticism that the Foreign Affairs Minister was never available in the Parliament to present, or respond to criticisms of, Australia's Timor policy -- in which Willesee ensured he was in the Parliament to answer all questions in the Senate on East Timor (30 September 1975 - 30 October 1975).

5 Harris, personal interview with J.S. Dunn, Canberra, November 1981, and personal interview with Viviani, Brisbane, September 1986.

1975 was so altered to conceal the fact that Australia knew Indonesian troops were active in East Timor, before the invasion of 7 December 1975. Ambassador Woolcott, in a leaked telegram to Foreign Affairs on October 19, advised:

> Although we know it is not true, the formal position of the Indonesian Government is still that there is no military intervention in East Timor. If the Minister (for Foreign Affairs) said or implied in public that the Indonesian government was lying, we ... would be regarded as having acted in a way which would stir up international opinion against Indonesia. Such a statement would also stimulate hostility to Indonesia within the Australian community, which has been our policy to minimize.[1]

Indeed, Willesee was to have said on 30 October, that he had seen reports suggesting a degree of Indonesian military involvement, and that he regretted this development. Following Woolcott's interposition, his final statement to Parliament said only that: 'the government has viewed with concern widespread reports that Indonesia is involved in military intervention in Portuguese Timor'.[2]

While Willesee later considered that 'Because of the differing attitudes of Whitlam and myself over Timor the going was not made easy for the department and maybe bewildered Indonesia as well',[3] the latter may well have been quietly confident in having allies in Whitlam, and the Department of Foreign Affairs, including Woolcott. As Willesee's private secretary at the time concluded, principally regarding the relationship that existed between these major actors in the foreign policy-making process:

> It seemed clear that Mr Whitlam, Mr Woolcott and the Department were joined in their belief that maintenance

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1 The Canberra Times, 31 May 1976. Woolcott indicated that during the pre-invasion period his role was to secure domestic opinion acceptance (of developments in East Timor) as part of Australia's policy-making process, bearing in mind Australia's long-term interests. If Indonesia was to use force, then the Australian Government would have to find ways to minimize the impact. In the meantime, Indonesia was not displaying any degree of competence in explaining what they were doing -- so it was for Australia to take this up, giving the Australian public the details of what was happening, and to explain. Harris, personal interview with Woolcott, Canberra, April 1988.

2 CPD, Senate, S.66, 30 October 1975, p.1609.

3 Harris, correspondence with Willesee, November 1986.

> of the relationship with Jakarta was the paramount consideration in Australian policy, but this three-way mutual support made reassessments of policy difficult if circumstances changed ... one might have been excused for believing (on the evidence of Woolcott's role...) that [he] was more assiduous in putting Indonesia's views to Australia than he was in pressing Australia's views on Indonesia.[1]

Senator Willesee's 30 October statement was the last substantial statement by the Labor government on East Timor before the domestic crisis that resulted in the appointment of a Liberal 'caretaker' government on 11 November, 1975.

At the time of the invasion, Whitlam, now Opposition leader, was quick to blame the caretaker government:

> We all know Indonesia's ... obsession with any movement ... described as communist ... And Mr Anthony's ... and Mr Fraser's use of the terms have undoubtedly confirmed and exacerbated Indonesia's attitudes.[2]

Whitlam, of course, was referring to the introduction three months earlier of an old strain in the conservative parties' foreign policy -- the spectre of a communist takeover in Timor -- and it was to set the pattern for the continuing debate on East Timor during the Fraser government period. Yet, although Whitlam was 'absolutely satisfied' he did as much as he could for a peaceful settlement of the Timor problem,[3] the web of things said and left unsaid by Whitlam throughout the previous eighteen months concerning East Timor and Indonesia's intentions, plans and activities, cast a towering and profound shadow over his defence.

The implications of the decolonization of Portuguese Timor clearly presented the Australia-Indonesia relationship with its greatest challenge since the rise of the 'New Order'. The Whitlam government sought from the outset, however, to avoid any involvement that could have led to a confrontation with Indonesia. While the ALP had, for more than a decade, consistently given strong support to the right of self-determination and independence for dependent territories, the Whitlam Government was, to say the least, guarded in its statements concerning the future of

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1 Viviani, N., "Australians and The Timor Issue", pp.220-221.

2 The National Times, 19-24 July 1976.

3 In a conversation with the author, Whitlam still maintained this view. Harris, telephone interview with Whitlam (Paris, France), September 1986.

Portuguese Timor.

However, public statements that did emerge from government and departmental sources made it abundantly clear that while Australia favoured the Indonesian arguments for integration, Whitlam believed in self-determination. Thus, although it was officially determined to step back from a situation that might risk conflict with Indonesia, by seeking both, Australian policy failed, and led the Australian Government inevitably to tolerate the use of force by Indonesia to bring about an end which Indonesia's meddling and subversion had failed to achieve.

The Fraser Government, 1975-78

Introduction

The Indonesian attack on Dili occurred only days before the Australian General Election and the victory of the Fraser Government, and during the vacuum created in Australian politics by the sacking of the Whitlam government. In a statement issued by the Indonesian government, it was argued that 'Indonesian volunteers [could not be prevented] from helping their brothers in East Timor in their struggle to liberate themselves from Fretilin oppression.'[1] Ten days later, a provisional government was established, headed by the chairman of Apodeti and recognized by the Indonesian Government. On 31 May 1976, the newly created East Timor People's Representative Council resolved in its first plenary session to incorporate the former Portuguese colony of East Timor, now considered to be under effective Indonesian control, into Indonesia. Presented as a petition to Suharto on 7 June, this resolution presaged an Indonesian mission despatched to the former colony to 'ascertain the wishes of the people of East Timor'. It was only a matter of weeks before the formal admission, on 17 July 1976, of the twenty-seventh province of Indonesia.

While the Fraser 'caretaker' government feigned surprise and shock when it learnt of the Indonesian invasion, Whitlam said he deplored it. Foreign Minister Peacock issued a statement saying that the Australian Government 'deeply regrets the course which

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[1] The Times, 8 December 1975. See also Decolonization in East Timor, Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, March 1977, p.39.

events in East Timor have taken',[1] and disavowed all L-CP responsibility for the tragedy that had unfolded in East Timor, saying the caretaker government had inherited the Labor government's mantle. The government then moved quickly to adopt a more active stand on the issue by expressing Australian Government opinion openly and firmly to the Indonesian Government, and by encouraging United Nations mediation. Australia's position was later broadened to include two other points -- the requirement that Indonesia withdraw all forces from East Timor and that humanitarian aid be administered to the East Timorese people through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This four-point policy was adhered to, with modification to that aspect of the policy related to aid, by the Fraser government for the next ten months and until the first meeting between Suharto and Fraser, in Jakarta, in October 1976.

A Background to Policy

In opposition, the coalition's tactical position on the Timor question had been one of strength. Not being the government, it was not required to make the hard decisions. Taking the high ground, and without actually condemning a pro-Indonesian settlement, Peacock chided the Whitlam government in September 1974 for prejudging and constraining an act of self-determination. The shadow Foreign Affairs Minister cited the Timor issue as an instance of the Labor government's inconsistency and 'hypocrisy', of mouthing grand anti-colonialist principles, but behaving otherwise. For Peacock, the Prime Minister's 'sanctimonious self-righteousness does not bear scrutiny'.[2]

In the heated debate on East Timor in the Parliament in February 1975, Peacock accused the Whitlam government of having shown no interest in the aspirations of local political movements in Timor, and Whitlam himself of having given approval, in his discussions with Suharto in September 1974, for Indonesia to take over the Portuguese territory. The Shadow Foreign Minister, however, offered no concrete suggestions for government action on the issue. That the Opposition faced the same dilemmas as those

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1 The Australian Financial Review, 9 December 1975.

2 The Age, 2 October 1974.

faced by the Whitlam government was reflected in Peacock's speech: while he stressed that the 'highest possible priority' be accorded Australia-Indonesia relations, Peacock also referred to the importance of an unhindered act of self-determination.[1]

By September 1975, however, with civil war raging in East Timor, Peacock had allegedly told Indonesia in a private meeting in Bali[2] that they shared an 'understanding' over Timor, and that he was satisfied with the thrust of Whitlam's policy on the former Portuguese colony.[3] If it took place,[4] this meeting, together with a statement to the Parliament in October[5] -- in which he indicated that the Opposition, like the government, understood the Indonesian position -- revealed Peacock in a different light. Gone were the sympathies and interests of a man who less than eight months before had initiated, as a matter of public importance, a debate in the Parliament on impending Indonesian actions. Peacock's stance and proposals[6] during the months straddling the UDT coup only served to suggest they were little more than attempts to make domestic political mileage.

Peacock's October statement, inevitably found approval in Jakarta, on a number of counts. First, it ruled out full independence for the former Portuguese territory and undermined Fretilin's claim to have secured legitimacy and popular support on

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.93, p.640, 25 February 1975.

2 Peacock met with Harry Tjan and Jusuf Wanandi of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies which was based in Jakarta, and headed by Ali Moertopo. In an interview with the author, Tjan did not deny such a meeting took place but he was evasive about details of the meeting. Harris, personal interview with Harry Tjan Silalahi, Jakarta, November 1981.

3 The National Times, 2 May 1977.

4 The National Times noted Peacock's denials that such a meeting took place but considered that the record of interview taken by the Indonesians was important despite Peacock's denial. See Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.312.

5 CPD, H.R., Vol.96, pp.1659-1660, 2 October 1975.

6 Advocating a role for the UN and ASEAN, and the re-opening of the Australian Consulate.

the basis of its military successes in the civil war.[1] Second, it contained no condemnation of the now persistent and well-founded reports of Indonesian military intervention and sabre rattling. Finally, it did not call for a United Nations solution to the problem. Importantly, following Whitlam's dismissal, Peacock, now interim Foreign Affairs Minister, abstained from making any strong criticism of Indonesia or supporting any of the critical remarks of his Labor predecessor, Senator Willesee, on Indonesian activity in East Timor. Peacock continued to show considerable sympathy for the Indonesian position when, on 26 November, he stated that he felt 'Indonesian patience to date with the civil war occurring in its archipelago is something to be noted'.[2] During the remainder of November, the 'caretaker' Fraser government followed closely the approach of non-involvement adopted by its predecessor, doing little to counsel a moderate Indonesian position. Moreover, on 29 November, Peacock announced that the caretaker government did not recognize Fretilin's 28 November claim for independence.[3]

The Fraser 'Caretaker' Government

During its short tenure, the Fraser 'caretaker' government claimed its hands were tied on Timor policy by the Labor line.[4] This, together with its emerging 'understanding' of Indonesia's concern, and its silence about continuing violence in Timor, were predictably interpreted by Indonesia as a sure signal that the Australian Government would not voice criticism if covert

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1 See also Peacock's statements in late October 1975, in which he considered there were only two alternatives for East Timor : (a) establish a State of East Timor, which would have a well-defined treaty association with Indonesia; or (b) the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia with the agreement of the Timorese. The Liberal Party, therefore, would not accept, and had never envisaged accepting, a fully independent East Timor. Peacock went on to say that anything outside these limits would be either unprincipled or unrealistic. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 6 November 1975).

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 27 November 1975.

3 Backgrounder, Department of Foreign Affairs, No.19, 5 December 1975, p.11.

4 The Fraser 'caretaker' government was confined by the conditions the Governor-General (Kerr) had imposed on Fraser when he granted him the interim mandate to govern.

intervention were extended to invasion by invited 'volunteer forces'.[1] In the event, the Fraser administration feigned surprise and shock when it learnt of the Indonesian invasion. Peacock's statement on the day of the invasion (7 December) dissolved all L-CP responsibility for the tragedy, saying the caretaker government had 'inherited the Timor crisis at the 11th hour'. Moreover, while he expressed concern at the use of force by Indonesia, Peacock considered there had been mitigating circumstances.[2] Subsequent government statements on the invasion were careful not to condemn Indonesia's actions.

On 12 December 1975, however, Australia's East Timor policy under the 'caretaker' government appeared to change, at least at the public level, when it voted with the majority in a UN General Assembly resolution which was critical of Indonesia's action and called for a withdrawal of its troops.[3] This was a setback for Indonesia and paved the way for subsequent Fraser government policy following its confirmation to office by a massive majority at the 13 December General Election. Indeed, the L-CP attitude changed from one of extenuation and muted criticism of Indonesian intervention to one of persistent expressions of concern. In early 1976, the public image that the Fraser government was attempting to cultivate was summarized by Peacock in the Federal Parliament:

> the government believes that there should be a cessation of hostilities, thus putting an end to bloodshed; a resumption of international humanitarian aid, preferably through the return to East Timor of the International Committee of the Red Cross Society; a withdrawal of Indonesian forces; and a genuine act of self-determination.[4]

While the Indonesian Government was genuinely surprised and angered at this radical shift in policy,[5] the Fraser-Peacock position implicitly argued that any endorsement they may have earlier given to Indonesian aims did not anticipate a full-scale invasion. Such a position was calculated to assuage growing hostility in the

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1 Harris, personal interview with Dunn, Canberra, November 1981.

2 The Age, 8 December 1975.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 13 December 1975.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.98, 4 March 1976, p.568.

5 The Canberra Times, 20 December 1975.

Australian community but it also assumed that Indonesian displeasure at Australia's stand would be short lived.

Australian Government Disapproval and Admonition of Indonesia

The ambiguous nature of this policy development, however, dominated the public debate on foreign policy in the early months of the Fraser government.[1] It strained relations with Indonesia and created a soured atmosphere marked by recriminations and the leaking of official documents.[2] Yet, the range of policy options for Australia was extremely narrow, even more so than before the Indonesian invasion. The choice was between silent acquiescence, inflaming further domestic criticism, or the encouragement of an active role by the United Nations. This would maintain international attention on the issue and, in view of the large UN majority opposed to its actions in Timor, embarrass Indonesia.

Whatever it chose to do, the government could not hope to emerge with much credit for success. It could not fully satisfy any of the interested parties -- Indonesia, Fretilin, its Australian supporters, or humanitarian groups. Arguably, therefore, the Australian Government chose the best of an unhappy range of options in the period up to the October 1976 meeting. Open abandonment of its principles and open acceptance of the line

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1 It was not until 1 June 1976 that Fraser made his first major statement on foreign policy, setting the tone and direction of Australia's policies for the next four years. While the favourable international environment of the early 1970s enabled Whitlam 'greater flexibility' and 'new opportunities' for change, independence and regional cooperation, by 1975 the climate had changed considerably. Detente between America and Russia had begun to sour; the Middle East moved from crisis to crisis; weapons technology and the arms race were advancing apace; world recession heightened economic rivalry between the Western nations; and Sino-Soviet animosities increased. And it was against this background that Fraser made his statement. (CPD, H.R., Vol.99, pp.2734-2744, 1 June 1976).

2 The most embarrassing leak occurred while Fraser was in China in June 1976. Fraser was reported to have described the Indonesian leadership, in discussions with Chinese officials in Peking, as 'ineffective and unstable'. (the Sydney Morning Herald, 29 June 1976). Alan Renouf, then Secretary to the Department of Foreign Affairs revealed to the writer that Fraser considered he was responsible for the leak. Harris, personal interview with Renouf, Sydney, November 1980.

favoured by the Indonesians would have been more discreditable than the ineffective upholding of principle, and would have provided even less of a basis for resisting similar moves in the future, if they were to arise.

In contrast to its public statements concerning the completion of the decolonization process, however, the Fraser government's actions left few doubts that there were differences between the administration's private and public position. The visit to East Timor by the UN Special Representative, Winspeare Guicciardi and the confiscation of a Fretilin radio transmitter in Darwin, firmly illustrated this point. In late January 1976, Guicciardi visited towns in East Timor which the Indonesians had held for several months, including Dili and Manatuto. Fretilin was anxious to have the UN envoy visit its territories, but the Australian Government first seized a mobile transmitter unit which had been used to monitor messages from -- and to send messages to -- Fretilin,[1] making communications difficult. It then refused on safety grounds to fly Guicciardi to Fretilin-held territories of East Timor.[2] The UN official's mission was aborted on 7 February, against a background of growing criticism that the Australian Government had ruined what chance there was for an effective UN role in the East Timor problems.[3]

Moderating Criticisms and de facto Recognition

By October 1976, and the meeting between Fraser and Suharto, the Australian Government had decided that little would be gained and a great deal lost in Australia-Indonesia relations if the resultant criticisms were to persist. It decided, therefore, that, without condoning Indonesian actions or formally recognizing Indonesia's integration of East Timor, it would refrain from public

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1 The Canberra Times, 24 January 1976.

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 30 January 1976.

3 To be fair to Peacock, however, he had urged Indonesia to allow Guicciardi to visit East Timor. This drew an angry response from Malik who insisted that Indonesia had been invited by the provincial government in East Timor 'to declare its sovereignty over the territory' (the Sydney Morning Herald, 15 January 1976).

censure.[1] At the conclusion of the talks, Fraser told a Jakarta press conference that he saw no need to continue to state his government's four-point policy, as it was 'on the record [and] I don't wish to restate it. The important thing is to look to the future and work to the future.'[2]

An important element in this decision was the attitude of the United States. It will be recalled that the emergence of the Suharto regime in the 1960s was considered by the USA and its allies as a major breakthrough in their attempts to overcome the Communist threat in the Southeast Asian region. Indonesia's strategic importance grew with the withdrawal of the United States from Vietnam. By the mid-1970s and with an increasing Soviet presence in the region, Indonesia had secured its place (and the appropriate level of military assistance) in the Western alliance's Southeast Asian defence strategy.[3]

It was, therefore, inevitable that the USA would adopt a position supporting Indonesia's actions in East Timor in the period leading up to and including the invasion.[4] So too was the warning to Fraser in August 1976 that it would not tolerate a deterioration in Australia's relationship with Indonesia.[5] In a visit to Washington that month, Fraser was told such a deterioration would have serious effects on the strategic position of the United States, and that Australia's opposition to Indonesian claims that East Timor had been integrated into Indonesia should end.[6]

While Fraser favoured maintaining his two-policy approach, his attempts to smooth over problems in the relationship ran aground when an official Indonesian spokesperson made a statement designed to make the Australian Prime Minister admit his private position in the public arena. Only minutes after Fraser left Jakarta for

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1 Peacock reaffirmed the government's four-point policy on several occasions during this period. See Chapter Ten.

2 The Age, 11 October 1976.

3 This is not to imply Indonesia entered into any formal security relationship.

4 It will be recalled that President Ford and Dr Kissinger were in Jakarta only days before the invasion.

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 3 August 1976.

6 Ibid.

Canberra, Lt. General Sudharmono publicly announced that Australia had recognized the integration of East Timor into Indonesia.[1] Although Fraser repudiated the statement, it gave rise to a bitter public and parliamentary debate in Canberra. Allegations and counter-allegations about secret understandings between the Whitlam and Fraser administrations with the Indonesian Government pervaded the debate and kept the Timor issue alive. So too did arguments about the propriety of, earlier in the year, the leaking of a cable from the Ambassador to Indonesia, Richard Woolcott, in which he urged the Australian Government to place realpolitik above idealism, and to accept the inevitability of the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia.[2]

While Fraser denied that Sudharmono's claims had any foundation, he did not again, during the period under review, publicly restate Australia's policy. By late October, with such developments having had the opposite impact on Australia-Indonesia relations to that intended, Peacock all but conceded defacto recognition of East Timor's integration into Indonesia. While he too argued that the Australian Government had not given defacto recognition, 'for quite practical reasons such as the provision of humanitarian aid and the reuniting of families, we have to accept certain realities'. In essence, if Australia's policies were to be effective they:

> must take into account the regional environment in which it is to function and although preserving our position on principle it has not and does not serve Australia's interests to place itself on a massive collision course with its largest regional neighbour. Some people clearly baulk at that viewpoint but it is a political reality and one we would do well to acknowledge.[3]

In the following months, and with the objective of repairing the relationship, the Fraser government moved to assist the Indonesian position by closing down Australia's Telecom link with Fretilin in

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1 The Canberra Times, 12 October 1976 and the AFR, 12 October 1976.

2 The Canberra Times, 16 January 1976. The Prime Minister was put on the spot by this leak and to have adopted this advice would have run counter to the Australian vote at the UNGA in December 1975. Fraser publicly rejected the Woolcott line.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.101, 20 October 1976, p.2016.

Timor and abstaining on a UN vote on the Timor issue.[1] While Peacock argued in March 1977 that the relationship was now 'soundly based', the previous months gave rise to allegations, contained in the recently released Dunn report, that Indonesian troops had been involved in atrocities during their invasion of Dili in December 1975.[2] This brought a sharp reaction from Indonesia who considered that this contradicted Fraser's position in October and, through Foreign Affairs Minister Malik, threatened mass demonstrations and reprisals against the Australian Embassy in Jakarta.[3]

By the second half of 1977, these concerns over alleged Indonesian excesses were being expressed by many Australians, including some L-CP backbenchers. A parliamentary call for a debate on Indonesia's behaviour was turned away by the government which also refused to become involved in a subsequent attempt by parliamentarians, right across the political spectrum to mount a fact-finding mission to Timor. Clearly, by this time, the Australian Government's strategy to rebuild the Australia-Indonesia relationship was under siege.

Meanwhile, through actions instigated by the Fraser government, the East Timor lobby[4] found more substance for criticism of appeasement: the Australian Government's refusal to protest the deaths of the five Australian journalists, said to have been murdered by Indonesian troops in October 1975; the ordering of Commonwealth Police to seize, on two occasions, radio transmitters in Darwin which were the sole contact Fretilin forces in East Timor had with Australia; the ordering of the seizure of ships chartered by aid groups which tried to take medical and other humanitarian aid to the blockaded East Timorese people; the banning of Fretilin

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1 See the Sydney Morning Herald, 18 October 1976 and 19 November 1976. The Australian Government considered the UN Resolution was neither 'realistic or constructive'. Backgrounder, No.67, p.10.

2 This followed the visits to Portugal by Labor MP, Gordon Bryant, and Jim Dunn. The Sydney Morning Herald, 14 January 1977. The Canberra Times, 28 January 1977 and 23 February 1977. See also Chapter Ten.

3 Australia's Ambassador, Woolcott, was also called in and given a verbal reprimand. The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 March 1977.

4 See Chapter 10.

leaders, from the UN and elsewhere, from visiting Australia. The government also abstained, in November 1977, from a UN vote strongly rejecting (61 votes to 26) the integration of Timor into Indonesia.[1]

In January 1978, the Australian Government recognized East Timor as Indonesian territory,[2] formalising a situation that had existed for well over a year -- a year in which the Fraser government had given all essential support to Indonesia's position on East Timor, while officially refusing to recognize its claims. The Fraser government was held back from formally supporting Indonesian policy by opposition within the party, UN and community opinion.

The recognition of Indonesia's actions was, for the Australian Government, therefore, a matter of timing. This was something Indonesia did not fully understand. Looking back on Fraser's policy, it is possible to discern slow movement to recognition. In essence, Fraser intended all along to help Indonesia until domestic and international opinion accepted Indonesia's claims. From the moment of Indonesia's invasion of East Timor, the importance attached to relations with Indonesia made this stand inevitable. No-one would risk open military confrontation, souring relations for a very long time in the process. In these circumstances, the argument to support Indonesia and use our influence to mitigate the worst elements of Indonesian violence became inevitable.

Australia's Indonesian Policy, 1978-80

In May 1979, Australian foreign policy now increasingly dominated by other complex and varied issues,[3] Fraser and Suharto

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1 The Canberra Times, 12 December 1977.

2 "News Release", 20 January 1978 in Statements on Foreign Policy, AGPS, Canberra, 1978.

3 These included the invasion of Kampuchea by the Soviet-backed Vietnam in late December 1978, following mounting hostilities in 1978; the stream of refugees from Vietnam, now also from Kampuchea; China's punitive attack on Vietnam in February 1979; the overthrow of the Shah in Iran and rising concerns over the 'Islamic Revolution'; the seizure of the American Embassy in Iran; the Soviet-backed coup against the existing Marxist regime in neighbouring Afghanistan in December 1979. This gave rise to a renewed emphasis in Australian foreign policy on the Soviet 'threat' and a compliance with the USA call for a boycott of the

met for informal talks in Bali. Returning from what was described as an exercise in regional diplomacy, intended to smooth over, if not altogether remove 'some of the politically embarrassing litter in Australia's northern neighbourhood',[1] the two leaders agreed to end nearly three and a half years of strained relations and to re-establish close official ties.

In what was clearly a signal for final rapproachement between the two governments, Fraser played down the significance of anti-Indonesian sentiment in sections of the Australian community, and foreshadowed a positive Australian response to any Indonesian request for development assistance. Moreover, in a statement during a press conference immediately following their 'constructive and forward looking' talks, Fraser stated his conviction that the delineation of the continental shelf boundary between Australia and Indonesia, and the reunion of East Timorese families in Australia would be settled satisfactorily between the two countries.[2] Fraser and Suharto also found common issues of major regional concern, particularly the Indo-China problem, and paved the way for discussion on the likelihood of an intensification of defence cooperation between the two countries.[3]

Within months, planning was underway for a high-powered and unpublicized seminar, to be held in November, on Australia-Indonesia relations, and organized by the Department of Foreign Affairs. Held in Canberra it was closed to the press and attended

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Olympic Games, to be held in Moscow in 1980.

1 Michael Richardson in the Age, 14 May 1979. Apart from the East Timor issue, Richardson was referring to ASEAN's campaign of agitation (principally through Malaysia and the Philippines) against the Fraser Government's import restraints on ASEAN manufactured and processed products, and the vehement campaign within ASEAN (led by Singapore) against the restrictive aspects of Canberra's international civil aviation policy.

2 Indonesian Times, 14 May 1979.

3 The Age, 15 May 1979. Richardson disclosed that Suharto suggested to Fraser that Australia and the ASEAN States standardize their defence equipment. Indonesia had been urging its ASEAN neighbours for some time to coordinate their defence procurement programs by acquiring similar equipment, mainly from the USA and Europe. It was the first time, however, that such a high-level approach had been made to include Australia in such an arrangement.

by senior government officials and academics from Australia and Indonesia. While it was seen by many in the Department of Foreign Affairs as setting the seal on the post-Timor era, paving the way for the improvement in relations signalled by the two leaders in May, the relationship continued to be bedeviled by the aftermath of Indonesia's actions in East Timor into the 1980s.[1]

Conclusion

Developments in East Timor throughout this six-year period highlighted certain general dilemmas and underlying weaknesses in Australia's relationship with Indonesia. Concerned that its territorial integrity was under threat, Indonesia showed that it was prepared to use an uncompromising stance and to adopt force to defend its interests if it could not achieve its objective by other means.[2] In such circumstances, Australia had two possible

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[1] In October 1979, a report prepared by the Foreign Affairs Research Group of the Australian Parliamentary Library, was critical of Indonesian policies to starving the Timorese Fretilin resistance and its supporters into submission. The report was incorporated in Hansard at the request of the ALP's Tom Uren (See the National Times, 20 October 1979); in November, the Sydney Morning Herald correspondent, and former diplomat Peter Rodgers, in a series of graphic reports brought to the Australian public the appalling conditions endured by the people of East Timor, raising questions concerning widening reports about Indonesian policies of starvation and genocide in East Timor (the Sydney Morning Herald, 31 October 1979, 1 November 1979. See also the Australian, 3 November 1979; the Age, 2 November 1979); in June 1980, due to a broadcast, based on incorrect information and attributed to ABC correspondent Warrick Beutler, by Radio Australia, the Indonesian Government closed the ABC's Jakarta office, and refused to renew Beutler's visa (see the Canberra Times, 23 June 1980); in October 1980, evidence implicating Indonesia emerged on the 1975 disappearance of Australian journalist, Roger East (See the Canberra Times, 23 October 1980). In late 1981, reports of a 'pacification' campaign in East Timor by Indonesian forces involved atrocities and was giving rise to a serious famine (See the Australian, 9 October 1981 and 3-4 October 1981).

[2] Indonesia moved systematically to protect what it considered to be its best interests: it established contacts with UDT and Apodeti officials following its early and unsuccessful contact with Fretilin; held discussions with Portugal in Indonesia, as well as in London, Rome and New York; and it used the media as a vehicle to provide evidence that East Timor was a threat to regional and domestic security, and to develop internal support for its position.

approaches. One placed emphasis on principle and argued that the Australian Government should adopt an honest and firm stance, pursuing a policy of open criticism of Indonesian actions -- even if such criticism was to lead to a deterioration in the relationship.

The second approach stressed pragmatism and claimed that Australia should maintain good relations with Indonesia because of Indonesia's geo-political strength and its significance in the Southeast Asian region. On this basis, such issues as West Irian's 'Act of Free Choice' in 1969, political prisoners, and the integration of East Timor into Indonesia should not be allowed to obscure the nature of Australia's interests in the region. While a sharp distinction was drawn between principle and pragmatism and, in practice, the Australian Government pursued the pragmatic approach, the conduct of Australia's East Timor policy left much to be desired. On the question of accepting political responsibility in the region, Whitlam adopted an isolationist posture. Indeed, Whitlam considered his government was not 'a party principal in Portuguese Timor', and disavowed any Australian interest in what the outcome in the territory might be. However, while Whitlam's underlying concern was the significance of the Australia-Indonesia relationship, by failing to emphasize that he would be concerned about the means by which the outcome was achieved, Whitlam deprived Australia any flexibility in the dispute, although it lacked any credible policy options. Nonetheless, Whitlam 'did not talk one way while acting in quite another',[1] an approach adopted by the Fraser government following the Federal Election in December 1975.

The basis, if not the origins, of the L-CP stance differed considerably from that of the ALP. In August 1975, Peacock argued that, in so far as East Timor had security and strategic consequences beyond its territorial boundaries, its future was 'of legitimate concern to the countries of the region'.[2] Under the new Fraser administration, Australia's East Timor policy became

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1 Mackie, J.A.C., "Australia's Foreign Policy, From Whitlam to Fraser", Dyason House Papers, Vol.3, No.1, August 1976, p.5.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.96, 26 August 1975, p.509. Peacock focused on three areas of major concern : the Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean, Sino-Soviet rivalry in Southeast Asia and the territory's links with left-wing elements in Portugal.

ambiguous: its public (four-point) policy called for the completion of the decolonization process. At the private level, it indicated little intention to implement its declared policy. The basic feature of Australia's East Timor policy under the Fraser administration was its domestic orientation. The conduct of the policy, however, illustrated the conflict between domestic image building, and maintaining a consistent foreign policy, with the result that both suffered. Moreover, it did little to improve the relationship between Australia and Indonesia, and invited America's admonition.

Thus, until 20 January 1978, and formal recognition of Indonesia's annexation of East Timor, the Australian L-CP Government fell back on the formula that 'friends can disagree'. ySuch disagreement on the government-to-government level, however, took place against a background of increasing criticism and disquiet among Australians towards Indonesian policies. The majority of those Australians in the 1974-75 period were on the left or in the centre of the political spectrum. The invasion of East Timor and the ambiguous nature of the Fraser government saw this criticism escalate and broaden to include critics right across the political spectrum. The strength and influence of these views are next to be examined.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EARLY IMPRESSIONS AND LASTING INTERPRETATIONS: THE ROLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN PRESS

Introduction

This chapter examines press opinion on the East Timor issue as it developed between 1974 and 1978.[1] It is also concerned, as in Chapter Four, with the press' role in reporting statements and actions concerning policy, and in assessing specific questions arising from official and public debates. The Chapter also seeks to establish whether the press was used by those involved in the formulation of policy to influence public opinion. However, while there is concern with the press' role as a forum and conveyor of information, the emphasis is less on the quality and depth of news reporting -- it is considered that this is presented adequately in other chapters[2] -- than with the manner in which the press handled the information about East Timor, and the way it defined the major issues as they emerged to dominate the Australian agenda.

Beginning of Change in East Timor

Until April 1974 and the coup in Portugal, very little attention had been given to the Portuguese colony of East Timor by the Australian press. However, with the emergence of the three political groupings -- Apodeti, ASDT (later Fretilin) and UDT -- some of the major newspapers began forming strong views about the kind of future that lay ahead for the former colony, including advice for those considered to have had any kind of stake in the impending decolonization process.[3] The Sydney Morning Herald, for instance, in mid-June, editorialized that East Timor, 'a pathetic remnant of the colonial era', was in a transitory state and that if the process was not handled properly it could pose serious problems

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1 Without exception, the press debate on Indonesian issues during this period was dominated by East Timor.

2 See Chapters Seven and Ten.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 8 June 1974; the Australian, 29 June 1974; the Nation Review, 15 August 1974.

for Jakarta, Canberra and Lisbon.[1]

The Sydney Morning Herald, however, would not advocate independence. In a view that was shared by others in the press who took an early interest in the matter, East Timor's chronic economic problems were seen to be a major obstruction to such an outcome, compelling the judgement that East Timor's future lay in integration with Indonesia. Such a step depended very much on the attitude of the Indonesian Government which, in the view of both the Mercury[2] and the West Australian,[3] very likely would not be prepared to accept the economic or political responsibility.

Only the Sydney Morning Herald[4] and the Age[5] made any direct reference to Australia's position in what was an increasingly fluid situation. The Sydney Morning Herald[6] pragmatically considered that while there were 'vital matters of security and communications for Canberra to consider', its underlying concern should be with unresolved negotiations between Australia and Portugal on the seabed division in the Timor Sea. Notwithstanding this, the Sydney Morning Herald also argued, as did the Mercury[7] and the Advertiser,[8] that whatever issues were involved, regard had to be extended by Canberra to the wishes of the Timorese people, without losing sight of Australian interests and responsibilities.

Such pragmatism formed the basis of early press attitudes and set the scene for the period leading to the first Whitlam-Suharto talks in September 1974. Interestingly, some in the Australian press began to focus on the lobbying activities, in Australia and Indonesia, of the Timorese political groups, as they attempted to

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 8 June 1974.

2 The Mercury, 28 June 1974.

3 The West Australian, 28 June 1974.

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 June 1974.

5 The Age, 26 June 1974.

6 The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 June 1974.

7 The Mercury, 28 June 1974.

8 The Advertiser, 2 July 1974.

secure political and economic support.[1] The Sydney Morning Herald[2] was quick to observe that Australia, unlike Indonesia, was cautious, if not unenthusiastic about such activities (in Indonesia, they received front page coverage, and of course Foreign Minister Malik's understanding).[3] The most incisive account and explanation for Australia's reticence was provided by Helen Hill in an article published in the Mercury[4]. Hill argued that Canberra, ever mindful of Indonesia's developing attitude on the matter, was concerned not to become officially identified with any particular faction within East Timor, and cynically concluded that it was more than likely that 'the discovery of oil off Timor could be the crucial factor in deciding the attitude of the Australian Government despite its anti-colonial statements in the UN'.

The Whitlam-Suharto Talks

While information was sparse in Australia on developments and conditions in East Timor, several newspapers attempted to clarify some of the major issues. On the whole, it was considered that events were shaping up for a dispute in the former Portuguese colony, and that the decolonization process did not guarantee a smooth transition to independence. Thus, when it was announced that Whitlam would hold talks with Suharto in Jogjakarta, few in the press had any doubts that the issue would dominate their agenda. Some of the better informed press, in the period leading up to the visit, provided their readers with a balance sheet of carefully weighed arguments of Australian and Indonesian interests in the issue.

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1 See for example the Sydney Morning Herald (22 July 1974) and Peter Hastings' report on Ramos Horta's activities in Australia, which included attempts to secure broad support for the notion of independence through meetings with Liberal and Labor MPs, and middle-level officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs. See also the Canberra Times report on the Apodeti visit to Jakarta (2 September 1974).

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 July 1974.

3 See Sinar Harapan, 17 June 1974; 12 June 1974, which was quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald, 22 July 1974. Refer also to Chapter Seven.

4 The Mercury, 15 August 1974.

The Age[1] considered Australia's interests derived in part from factors related to geographical proximity and also from broader commitments, including our relations with Indonesia. The Canberra Times stressed that Indonesia's internal security interests more acutely centred on the implications of the proposed decolonization process for the status quo in the territory.[2] In this regard, while the Mercury[3] and the Age[4] acknowledged Indonesia's public announcements of a policy of non-interference in the affairs of East Timor, both provided insights into a private debate that they felt had to be going on in Indonesia and which advocated incorporation, particularly if this were seen to serve Australian, Indonesian and Timorese interests. For The Sun, such behaviour would be circumscribed by Indonesia's desire for international respectability. It thus concluded, on the eve of the Suharto-Whitlam talks, that the focus of any discussion of the matter would include consideration of how to bring Portuguese Timor into the Indonesian Republic, through legitimate means.[5]

The Sydney Morning Herald[6] was still more pragmatic. While the talks would be 'quiet, earnest and exploratory', both countries had a continuing interest in regional stability and in the role they needed to play to maintain it. Moreover, putting the Timor issue into some kind of historical context, the Sydney Morning Herald saw it only as another, yet important, phase in the evolution of the Australia-Indonesia relationship. However, it acknowledged that this phase faced a fundamental problem: the tendency for Canberra to be 'blind ... to mounting concern on the part of some politically vocal Australians' over developments in Indonesia. Thus, Whitlam's task, in historical terms, could prove to be fraught with difficulties. While the Sydney daily counselled Whitlam to embrace the ideas behind such criticisms (principally,

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1 The Age, 5 September 1974.

2 The Canberra Times, 4 September 1974.

3 The Mercury, 5 September 1974.

4 The Age, 5 September 1974.

5 The Sun, 6 September 1974.

6 The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 September 1974.

over issues such as corruption and political prisoners) it warned him to transcend them in reaching any understanding with Suharto over East Timor.[1]

This theme was also pursued by the Australian and the Age. The former called on Whitlam to tread carefully. It suggested that on such issues Whitlam could 'try to exert some persuasive but absolutely private influence on President Suharto', bearing in mind that he needed to try to make up for ground lost with his early forays into international diplomacy, which included, among other things, his 'grand concept of a broad Asian forum', and resulted only in 'frighten[ing] the hell out of the Indonesians'.[2] The Age tended to the view that, in relation to Timor, Whitlam was an observer and stressed that a solution lay only with Indonesia. It predicted that as both leaders had shown themselves to be pragmatists in their relations to date, they would be anxious to ensure a measure of cooperation rather than to impose their principles on each other.[3]

It was considered by the more authorative journalists[4] of those who accompanied the Prime Minister that mutual tolerance was, at the very least, a strategic imperative for Australia, and it emerged as a major theme in much of their reporting about the Prime Minister's visit to Indonesia.[5] However, in dealing with Indonesia, Whitlam was driven by a sense of co-operation that went far beyond arid national interests -- he embraced the notion that if Australia could not make a success of its relations with Indonesia, it could quite likely fall short in its dealings with the rest of Asia. The nature of the relationship was such at the time of Whitlam's visit that, due to mounting Australian domestic criticisms of Indonesia, neither Whitlam nor the relationship could

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 September 1974.

2 The Australian, 5 September 1974, and the Age, 5 September 1974.

3 The Age, 6 September 1974.

4 In particular, Peter Hastings and Michael Richardson.

5 Refer, for example, to the Age, 5 September 1974 and the Sydney Morning Herald, 5 September 1974. See also the Advertiser, 6 September 1974 and the Mercury, 6 September 1974.

afford any controversy. While this foreshadowed an exchange in which Indonesian views would be predominant, the Canberra Times reminded the Prime Minister that while 'Understandings reached at the political level are valuable[,] ... their real worth has to be judged by the degree to which they reflect or influence popular attitudes'.[1]

The eventual agreement between Whitlam and Suharto that the best and most realistic future for Timor was an association with Indonesia, drew some predictable responses. The Age's Hugh Armfield highlighted the arguments prevailing in Canberra that an independent East Timor would attract external influences and would, therefore, not be in the region's interests.[2] Michael Richardson stressed the implications that developments within the territory -- in particular the decolonization process and the abilities of the political parties to harness popular support -- would have on the perceptions and actions of both Australia and Indonesia. In this regard, he considered the next twelve months would be a testing time for Australia's relations with Indonesia.[3] Richardson reasoned that such an issue increasingly concerned powerbrokers in Jakarta, and he was convinced that those in the regime who were opposed to East Timor's independence were also very influential.

Richardson was of the view that with Whitlam's attitude clearly conditional in nature, and the new government in Portugal displaying little interest in the territory, 'the opportunities for Indonesia to exercise a legitimate influence on Timorese public opinion have expanded'. However, the temptation and openings, he warned rather prophetically, also existed for Indonesia to undertake clandestine activities and apply pressures that, in effect 'would cross the grey line separating legitimate influence from intervention in the internal affairs of a tiny territory, by a big, bullying neighbour'.[4]

In the Sydney Morning Herald,[5] Peter Hastings was critical of

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1 The Canberra Times, 6 September 1974.

2 The Age, 13 September 1974.

3 The Age, 29 October 1974.

4 The Age, 29 October 1974.

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 September 1974.

Whitlam's haste in announcing the unviability and potential instability of the colony. Yet, he considered the basic tenets of the Prime Minister's approach represented 'the tidiest solution'; his criticism centred more on its public expression:

> For the Prime Minister to voice such views publicly, in view of the increasingly anti-Indonesian attitudes shared by many in his own party, let alone by others in Australia, was somewhat incautious.

Further, such publicly expressed sentiments would not reassure fledgling regional micro-States, like Tonga and Western Samoa which, on paper, and in terms of potential, looked less viable than East Timor. This was a theme he developed in mid-November when, in a series of articles he put it to his readers, that for East Timor to find its feet:

> it will need aid, and there is only one place to which the new political elites of all persuasions are looking and that is Australia which, rightly or wrongly, they feel is indebted to the Timorese for help and assistance rendered Australian forces in World War II.[1]

But Hastings went on to identify what was a crucial element in the whole East Timor equation when he said Jakarta's fear of communist influence was a consideration that a 'wise Australian policy must take [into] ... account'. In the meantime:

> the question is whether Jakarta will wait and see whether the Portuguese Timorese will opt for incorporation ... or for continued association with Portugal for a period, followed by independence... For some in Jakarta, timing is now crucial and there are those urging emergency tactics including the use of force.[2]

By late January 1975, the Sydney Morning Herald[3] had reported that the cancellation at the end of the month of the visit to Timor by a parliamentary delegation indicated in Australia 'a new political awareness of Indonesia's sensitivities over the complex Timor problem'. For Hastings, an added complexity resided in the upcoming elections in Portugal, in which it was likely that the communists could secure 15 to 25 percent of the vote. This would not mean a communist government, but it would mean communist representation in the Cabinet, with links to leftist elements in Portuguese society. He reasoned this did not augur well for the

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 14 November 1974.

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 November 1974.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 January 1975.

Indonesian Government where a developing fear of communist subversion arising from possible communist activities in East Timor constituted 'a real political factor, just as Jakarta's fears of fragmentation in eastern Indonesia are real political factors'. Hastings concluded all this was pointing to the possibility of Indonesia 'tak[ing] out Portuguese Timor in the same way and with the same ease as India took out Goa in 1961' -- something that was clearly not in the interests of the region.[1]

The Invasion Scare and the Second Whitlam-Suharto Talks

By the end of January 1975, UDT and Fretilin had merged. But generally the press, surprisingly, were offering no analysis of the implications of this development. One exception was the Canberra Times which positively evaluated the chances of independence for East Timor, now that such a merger had the capacity to counter Indonesia in its quest for popular opinion.[2] However, the report by Peter Hastings in the Sydney Morning Herald[3] of an impending Indonesian invasion, jolted the press into a deeper and more intensive discussion, and it was sustained up until the second Whitlam-Suharto talks, in Townsville, in April 1975.

In a single article, Hastings had provided a catalyst for movement at a variety of levels, including: in Australia, an urgency debate in Parliament, press speculation and the mobilization of groups in the Australian community at large; and, in Indonesia, a measure of anger and hostility. In his article, based on 'increased foreign press awareness ... letters one receives from interested observers and ... inevitable leaks in Jakarta itself', Hastings put to his readers the belief that:

> the Indonesian Government is seriously considering taking out Portuguese Timor in a military operation in the not-too-distant future.

He placed such a development squarely on the shoulders of both Whitlam and Suharto: the Indonesian leader for miscalculating that the colony would 'succumb to propaganda broadcasts and infiltration tactics [and] ... fall like a ripe apple', and the Prime Minister

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 January 1975.

2 The Canberra Times, 28 January 1975.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 February 1975.

for assenting to this process. In essence:

> Jakarta's miscalculations have to some extent been those of Mr Whitlam, who has contributed to the situation with his positive mania for giving away things that are not Australia's to give away, subsequently hoping that the resultant mess can be swept under the carpet.

The Sydney journalist considered that such a proposal would have severe strategic implications on two levels. The first related to the attitudes of the global and regional powers, as well as to the possibility that 'the most important achievement of the new-order Indonesian government, regional equilibrium, ... would badly fracture'. Integral here, and second, was the prospect of an erosion of the growing sense of regional trust and stability which had slowly emerged in the wake of Vietnam. Yet, Hastings acknowledged fully the Suharto regime's now real concerns that an independent East Timor would 'act as a Trojan horse for communist interference and as a possible incentive to East Indonesian separatists'. Clearly, Hastings articulated Indonesia's dilemma very well.

The reaction of the Australian press to Hastings' revelations were mixed. The editorial of the Australian confirmed intelligence reports which supplemented Hastings' sources and shared his concern when it said 'A campaign of gentle persuasion, aimed at winning the hearts and minds of the Timorese, is one thing; armed intervention is another ...'. It called on Whitlam to step in and put pressure on Jakarta against such a course of action for many of the major reasons put by Hastings.[1] The Canberra Times[2] considered that 'Indonesia is more interested in denying Timor as a base to a potential enemy than in the use it could make of it itself' and did not rule out a military takeover. The Sydney Morning Herald's editorial[3] was typically blunt:

> Jakarta is either embarking on a clumsy propaganda campaign to justify a military takeover in Portuguese Timor, or is testing the water for international reactions. In either event ... President Suharto should not be allowed to delude himself that he can repeat in Timor President Sukarno's coup in New Guinea without

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1 The Australian, 26 February 1976.

2 The Canberra Times, 26 February 1975.

3 Very likely to have been written by Hastings himself.

incurring grave risks.[1]

Creighton Burns, writing in the Age,[2] considered there were three reasons why it was unlikely that Indonesia would undertake such a severe action, in the short term. In the first place it would, technically, be an act of aggression against Portugal, as long as Portugal retained its colony. Second, Indonesia would be loathe to jeopardize its progress in establishing itself as a regional power, a likely consequence of any invasion. Third, with East Timor gripped by the typhoon season, there would be logistical problems in any maritime or air activities. However, Burns argued, if Indonesia, in the long term, deemed it necessary to engage in such action, she would be able to take the colony militarily 'between breakfast and lunch ... tomorrow, if they chose'. In such circumstances, and a view which was shared and put by Mungo MacCallum, neither a Portuguese garrison nor a 'disunited unprepared Timorese nationalists' outfit could mount any kind of resistance campaign to repel an invasion.[3]

Underlying Burns' views were two further considerations. First, Indonesia was in the process of a campaign of 'psychological confrontation' against any kind of movement in East Timor towards independence. In effect, they were 'trying to preserve, or create, a political position there rather than invade the island'. Second, unlike the Sydney Morning Herald,[4] Burns considered the 'leak' of the invasion was calculated to signal to the Indonesians that they should take matters easily and quietly, and to create a demonstration of aroused Australian public opinion. This would enable the Australian Government to argue to the Indonesians that public opinion in Australia would not accept anything less for the East Timorese than self-determination -- clearly a creditable alternative for a Prime Minister (and his government) trying to shed themselves of a policy that had been eroded by events in East Timor following its enunciation during the first Whitlam-Suharto

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 26 February 1975.

2 The Age, 26 February 1975.

3 The National Review, 20 February 1975.

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 26 February 1975.

talks. [1]

Mungo MacCallum pursued the second of Burns' two points, indicating his belief that the 'leak' from the Defence Department postponed, if not prevented altogether, what was to be an inevitable invasion. This relieved a situation for Whitlam who, if such an invasion had taken place, would have had to absorb a great deal of the blame.[2] While not condoning such an action by Indonesia, Dennis Warner set down his understanding of the 'reality' of the East Timor problem, at least as the Indonesians saw it. In essence:

> Let there be no doubt about it - if the Indonesian military leadership believes that Portuguese Timor may fall under communist influence ... then their troops will move in and take over ... In protection of what it regards as its own vital national interests ... The Cold War may be dead and buried and detente the order of the day, but the generals have not forgotten how close the Indonesian Communist Party came to power a decade ago.[3]

Warner concluded with the view that although Whitlam and his government may have felt comfortable with a strategic assessment that denied the existence of a threat for at least another 15 years, seen from Jakarta, South-East Asia did not look so tranquil. Indeed, from the Indonesia perspective, it was the opposite, with threats to peace and security as formidable as ever, and East Timor representing the most immediate threat.

The Age editorial[4] was not convinced by Indonesia's subsequent denials of an armed takeover, with reports of invasion exercises and army road building plans on the Indonesian side of Timor, only making 'the Timor puzzle more plotty and difficult to understand'. Moreover, it had only just been revealed that the Age's South-East Asia correspondent, Michael Richardson, and an ABC team were refused entry into Indonesian Timor, and it compelled the Age to conclude that this 'denial of access ... is beginning to look

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[1] If this was not a true depiction of Whitlam's strategy at the time, then there would have been every likelihood that he would have defended his policy during the censure debate, initiated by Peacock on 25 February 1975. In the event, he did not (see Chapter Nine).

[2] The National Review, 20 February 1975.

[3] The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 February 1975.

[4] See also Helen Hill, the National Review, 7 March 1975.

positively sinister'.[1]

Apart from the Age,[2] the press in general fell silent. The Sydney Morning Herald was one of the few newspapers[3] to pursue Indonesia's reaction to these events. According to Michael Richardson, in a lead story in March:

> The Indonesian government has been angered by what it alleges is an anti-Indonesian conspiracy being mounted by the left wing of the Australian Labor Party, certain defence and intelligence officials in Canberra, senior figures in the Opposition parties including ... Peacock, and some Australian journalists.[4]

However, such reactions were to emerge at the centre of Australian press coverage of the second Whitlam-Suharto talks, in April, in Townsville, Queensland.

The Age[5] put it to its readers that although developments in Indo-China, and economic and diplomatic relations with China and Japan, would dominate the agenda of discussions between Whitlam and Suharto, the most politically sensitive issue listed for discussion was the decolonization of East Timor. The Melbourne newspaper, like the Courier-Mail[6] and the Advertiser,[7] argued that both leaders would be keen to defuse the Timor issue, as neither Australia nor Indonesia had much to gain politically from any kind of confrontation over what was considered to be such a small part of the Indonesian archipelago. However, as the Age rationalized, the biggest problem facing Whitlam and Suharto lay in drawing up a solution that would not only accommodate Indonesia's fears of a leftist Government in East Timor, but would also embrace the notion of self-determination.[8]

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1 The Age, 4 March 1975.

2 The Age, 5 March 1975, 10 March 1975, 12 March 1975, 17 March 1975 and 20 March 1975.

3 See this story also in the Age, 1 March 1975.

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 1 March 1975.

5 The Age, 3 April 1975.

6 The Courier-Mail, 3 April 1975.

7 The Advertiser, 4 April 1975.

8 The Age, 3 April 1975.

It seemed, though, that the press were more interested in reporting Suharto's assurances that Indonesia had no territorial ambitions,[1] and the strongly held view that Australia had 'overreacted' to reports of an impending invasion.[2] The Age, nevertheless, assured its readers that Whitlam, for his part, deduced from his meetings with Suharto that Indonesia's sabre-rattling was 'histrionic rather than serious', and that he had explained 'the importance of his qualification ... in private talks' during their September meetings that, although Timor's future may well be with the Indonesian Republic, it must happen on the basis of an internationally acceptable act of free choice by the Timorese.[3] Although many newspapers were still critical of this aspect of the discussions in September, most concluded that there were signs that common grounds for accord had been reached, and that the Timor problem, as an explosive issue between the two countries, had finally been defused. However, these signs were quickly eroded by events leading to and surrounding the UDT coup in August 1975.

The UDT Coup and Its Aftermath

Press reporting in the wake of the talks was taken up by domestic political issues and little attention was paid to developments unfolding in East Timor -- although the breakdown of the UDT-Fretilin merger and the circumstances surrounding the scheduled talks in Macao, in June 1975, generated some interest.[4] On 12 August, however, the Australian press reported with concern that UDT had mounted a coup in the East Timor capital of Dili. The coup, and the ensuing fighting between UDT and Fretilin forces, began a period in which Australian press coverage increased noticeably, as did the number of first-hand reports emanating from the war-torn territory. At the centre of this group of journalists

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1 The Age, 5 April 1975.

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 3 April 1975; the Mercury, 4 April 1975; and the West Australian, 5 April 1975.

3 The Age, 5 April 1975.

4 See the Canberra Times, 30 May 1975 and 30 June 1975; the Age, 1 July 1975, and Peter Hasting's article in the Sydney Morning Herald, 12 June 1975.

and observers,[1] was a nucleus of Australian-based reporters and foreign correspondents like Hamish McDonald,[2] Michael Richardson,[3] John Hamilton[4] and Gerald Stone.[5] Their coverage of events on the island represented careful and useful assessments of events as they unfolded. Editorial opinion during this period also contributed to the shaping of Australian news coverage of the East Timor issue.

However, in the first month following the UDT coup, journalists were prevented from going to East Timor,[6] and this gave rise to a press coverage that, in relying extensively on a volley of eye-witness accounts from refugees and on Indonesian newspapers, was extremely sensationalist.[7] It was not until the first Red Cross teams and journalists were able to reach the war-torn territory that more balanced accounts began to emerge, documenting the tragedy that was unfolding in East Timor. While the main focus of this coverage was on the extent of the fighting that had taken and was taking place[8], as well as the nature of Fretilin's rule[9],

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1 These included James Dunn, Jill Jolliffe, Grant Evans and Helen Hill; Australian aid personnel from the NGOs and parliamentary delegations. See below.

2 Of the Sydney Morning Herald and The National Times (John Fairfax).

3 The Age's Southeast Asia correspondent (John Fairfax).

4 The Herald (Melbourne, Herald and Weekly Times).

5 Consolidated Press (The Bulletin and TCN Channel 9, Sydney).

6 Hill, H., The Timor Story, p.12.

7 See for example, the Australian's coverage: "Timor Slaughter" and "Babies Beheaded with Cutlasses" (26 August 1975); the West Australian: "'Bloodbath' in Dili" (26 August 1975), and "Refugees Tell of Carnage" (26 August 1975). The information upon which these stories were based came from refugees who had been evacuated to Darwin on the refugee ship Lloyd Bakke. The Indonesian newsagency Antara was the source of a story in the Daily News (10 September 1975) which reported (contrary to other press reporting at the time), Fretilin control in East Timor only extended to a narrow coastal strip on the northern areas of East Timor, with the Indonesian-backed Apodeti in control of the remainder of the territory.

8 The most authoritative accounts came from Michael Richardson in the Age, 26 August 1975, 5 September 1975, and 9 December 1975.

increasing attention was directed toward investigating widespread allegations and rumours of Indonesian military involvement in the border fighting.[1]

Throughout this period the majority of press correspondents came to the conclusion that, before the UDT coup, a decision had been made by influential elements within the Indonesian Government to covertly exploit the political unrest in the territory. It was agreed that this would serve to create a situation so chaotic that Indonesian intervention could be readily justified. Moreover, editorial opinion became increasingly cynical about the Australian Government's transparent calls for Portugal to reassert control. As the Age noted:

> This may be a desirable objective as a prelude to an act of choice; it may also be difficult to reconcile with current realities [with] ... East Timorese ... locked in a bloody conflict and at the same time inviting the attention of Indonesia's interventionists.[2]

This was a concern also expressed by Hastings and Dennis Warner. Both saw a situation developing that not only put pressure on the Indonesian Government -- already under added stress as Suharto attempted to moderate hawks in Jakarta who, fearing a threat to Indonesian and regional stability, were pressing for a 'quick surgical strike' to restore order[3] -- but also on the Australia-Indonesia relationship.[4] As Richardson had argued in late August:

> The unpalatable conclusion the Whitlam government must reach is that if it fails to protest against use of force it may stir up a hornet's nest of criticism in Australia

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9 See, for example, John Hamilton's "My Mad, Mad War", the Herald, 27 September 1975 and John Edwards' "Timor - A New Vietnam" the National Times, 29 September 1975.

1 See, for example, the Australian, 24 September 1975; the Canberra Times, 29 October 1975 and 25 November 1975; the Herald, 27 October 1975; and the Sydney Morning Herald, (18 August 1975 and 3 November 1975) which put strong national interest arguments as to why Indonesia should, in view of the perceived communist threat, be actively involved in the territory.

2 The Age, 23 August 1975.

3 The Age, 26 August 1975; the Sydney Morning Herald, 25 August 1975.

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 3 November 1975 and 6 November 1975.

> and, if it protests at all, it will find itself keeping company with a select vanguard of States which Indonesia eyes with intense suspicion.[1]

In the following months, early divisions in the press over Whitlam's rejection in August of any kind of mediating role for Australia in the issue[2] (accompanied by charges that Fraser and Anthony were inciting Indonesia by referring to the emergence of Communism in East Timor[3]), coincided with: sustained press opinion which stressed that Australia and Indonesia should continue pressuring Portugal to take some action in East Timor;[4] Portuguese attempts to mount a regional peacekeeping force and to get negotiations underway between the Timorese parties; as well as, in October, increased military activities in the border regions, amid denials by Indonesia's Foreign Minister, Malik, that the Indonesian military were 'active in East Timor'.[5] By the end of October, however, there was mounting evidence that Indonesia was militarily involved in the territory,[6] the key incident during this period as far as Australia was concerned being the deaths at Balibo of the five Australian journalists.[7] Indeed, as the Sydney Morning Herald editorialized:

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1 The Age, 26 August 1975.

2 The Canberra Times, and the Sydney Morning Herald for example were critical of Whitlam and called for Australian mediation (27 August 1975), while the Age (28 August 1975) urged a UN role, and the Australian argued that interventionally, Indonesia was 'almost an international obligation' (30 August 1975).

3 See Chapters Seven and Nine.

4 See the Sydney Morning Herald, 26 August 1975 and the Canberra Times, 27 August 1975.

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 October 1975.

6 The Sydney Morning Herald, 27 November 1975.

7 Greg Shackleton, Tony Stewart and Gary Cunningham from HSV Channel 7 in Melbourne, and Malcolm Rennie and Brian Peters from the Nine Network. Shackleton and Stewart were Australian citizens. Rennie and Peters were British, and Cunningham a New Zealander. For an account of the tragic circumstances surrounding their deaths see Jolliffe, J., East Timor, pp.167-177 and pp.233-241. See also Hamish McDonald, 'Death at Balibo', the National Times, 7 July 1979.

> The fate of the five Australian newsmen has focused public attention on the crisis in Portuguese Timor. Those Australians who doubted the gravity of the situation there since August, who declined to recognize an Australian interest in ending the colony's bloody discord or who failed to appreciate the depth of Indonesia's concern have had a rude awakening....[1]

While the circumstances surrounding the tragedy were shrouded in mystery, the expectation in the Australian press[2] was that it would compel the Australian Government to take a firm stand against Indonesia. It was soon clear, however, that this would not happen.[3] This caused an outcry in the Australian press, because of reports and allegations that the journalists had been deliberately killed. The unexplained circumstances surrounding their deaths, however, as well as Indonesia's unwillingness to assist in resolving them, saw the issue kept to the forefront in subsequent press analyses of Indonesia's actions in East Timor. In the remaining weeks until the Indonesian invasion, it served to generate larger moral questions about the actions of the Indonesians, as well as the Australian Government's willingness to acquiesce in them.[4]

The Invasion

The depth of coverage accorded events in Timor during the second half of 1975 was affected by two factors: domestic political issues in Australia -- in particular, the political turmoil in which the Whitlam government was immersed -- and events taking place in Indo-China, not least the fall of South Vietnam. In the same way, the sacking of the Whitlam government and the federal election that followed, overshadowed the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. While this event and subsequent Indonesian military activities rendered press access to the territory impossible, news

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 October 1975.

2 See Robert Duffield's column in the Australian, 11 November 1975. See also Peter Hastings' views in the Sydney Morning Herald, 6 November 1975.

3 Refer to Chapters Seven and Nine.

4 Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.177. See, for example, the Canberra Times, 28 November 1975; the Sydney Morning Herald, 10 November 1975.

coverage of developments in the former colony were sustained by the majority of Australia's newspapers on two levels.[1] On one level, Fraser's opposition to the invasion in January 1976 served to keep press interest in the issue alive, as did Australia's activities in the UN, which were aimed at seeking a solution to the events taking place, and Indonesia's movement towards the official incorporation of East Timor into the Republic. On another level, the strong partisan debate within Australia maintained the momentum of press concern, as did Australia's four-point Timor policy, and the final official recognition of Indonesia's annexation in January 1978.

When Indonesia invaded East Timor, the Australian press reaction was harsh. The Sydney Morning Herald,[2] in a shift from its earlier stated views, called on the Australian Government to 'express with force and precision our condemnation of [such] ... an act of aggression', while The Herald[3] in Melbourne urged condemnation, effective action at the UN to establish a peacekeeping force on Timor, and an immediate aid-and-comfort program for the Timorese people, mounted in Australian aircraft and ships. Moreover, it called for a genuine act of self-determination for the people of East Timor. The Canberra Times[4] attacked Whitlam, calling him a 'Pontius Pilate', and it drew parallels between Indonesia's 'slaughter in Timor' and the Soviet Union's interventionist policies since the mid-1950s. Further, it condemned Australia's responses to the problem, under both the Whitlam and Fraser (interim) governments, as 'appeasement'.

While the Australian[5] considered that any complaint to Indonesia by Australia would be nothing but 'crocodile tears', the

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1 An examination of the press debate on the incorporation (although minimal) is only briefly undertaken here; press views on the ensuing partisan debate in Australia is not undertaken. They are examined in the wider contexts of the issues examined in Chapters Seven through Ten.

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 8 December 1975.

3 The Herald, 8 December 1975.

4 The Canberra Times, 8 December 1975.

5 The Australian, 8 December 1975.

West Australian[1] drew strong parallels between what had happened in East Timor and the West Irian takeover in 1962.[2] In this context, the Sydney Morning Herald considered Indonesia's action:

> has a sharp and frightening lesson for Australia. It is that if Indonesia ... decided to take over by force of arms an area considered vital to Australian security, Australia lacks the military strength to prevent it. Papua New Guinea is such an area.[3]

The press in general agreed, however, that Indonesia's decision to impose her own solution on the problem by force should have surprised nobody and was seen clearly to have been no more justifiable or palatable for having been foreseen. But of much greater moment for some was the future of Australia-Indonesia relations. On one level, concern was expressed that there be no further schism in the relationship by way of a cessation of economic and defence assistance programs.[4] On another level, East Timor was to be seen as a watershed, as it revealed two fundamental aspects about the relationship. First, Indonesia had little regard for Australian views when it believed vital regional security interests were at issue. Second:

> even over problems like Timor, in the proper and peaceful solution of which Australia has a legitimate interest, this country is largely impotent. And Indonesia knows it.[5]

Early in 1976, the pattern of the Indonesian takeover of East Timor was crystallizing. A provisional government was set in place by mid-December, with Apodeti dominating its ranks, and an act of self-determination was planned within a year -- with the results not expected to be any different to those of the act of 'free choice' in West Irian in 1969. Moreover, the United Nations' special representative, Dr Vittorio Guicciardi, was expected to visit both Jakarta and East Timor by the middle of January, in the wake of an Indonesian party led by Foreign Affairs Minister Malik.

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1 The West Australian, 9 December 1975.

2 See comments similar to these in the Advertiser, 10 December 1975.

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 9 December 1975.

4 See, for example, the Sydney Morning Herald, 13 December 1975.

5 Ibid., See also the Age, 30 December 1975.

These events, together with sustained Indonesian attempts to overcome the resistance being mounted by Fretilin, seemed to indicate an inevitable incorporation of the Portuguese colony into the Indonesian Republic.

The Australian press, however, in the early months of 1976, looked beyond this inevitability and became entranced with a vision of the 'horror of carnage and mutilation by Indonesian forces'[1] during the December invasion. Jill Jolliffe, writing in the Age, presented a picture of 'premeditated and systematic destruction', and recounted the horrors of events that had enveloped the colony.[2] The National Times presented to its readers a picture of 'indiscriminate killing and looting' by Indonesian soldiers, suggesting that the invasion was 'marked by a breakdown in discipline and tactical command'. It also warned:

> Fretilin ... does possess enough to carry on a nasty guerilla war, and it ... still has at least 2000 men left of its frontline forces. The big question is their will to fight and the degree of cover they will be given by the Timorese people.[3]

It also directed strong criticism at both the Whitlam and Fraser governments for suppressing 'the knowledge they have had of the ruthless nature of Indonesia's intervention'. Michael Barnard, writing in the Age, took it further, arguing that:

> some of our basic ideals ... - including concern for the oppressed and a regard for human rights - are patently dying in the towns and jungles of East Timor ... buried by the day with the tragic victims of the Timorese civil war and worse, of the ruthless jackboot intervention of Indonesia ... without mincing words, appeasement is the crux of Australia's policy toward the Timor problem. Our long-term relationship with the 'giant', Indonesia, has been the governing principle throughout. It has been a case of 'don't rock the boat', carried to the extent even of not hauling a drowning man on board.[4]

These two themes -- the war in Timor, and Australia's reticence to respond to developments in the Portuguese colony -- dominated press

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1 Jolliffe, J., the Age, 5 January 1976.

2 The Age, 5 January 1976. The source of her accounts was radio messages being beamed to Darwin from East Timor. See also the Canberra Times, 6 January 1975 and the Age, 14 January 1976.

3 The National Times, January, 5-10, 1976.

4 The Age, 10 January 1976.

opinion for the next six months.

The Daily Telegraph[1] considered that there was no excuse for Australia's continued silence over the atrocities being committed on the East Timorese people by Indonesian troops. It demanded that Australia 'voice ... condemnation in the strongest possible terms', considering the Indonesian invasion turned what was an internal affair -- the civil war -- into a situation that was marked by 'an act of aggression by a strong country against another that is small and defenceless'. The Sunday Telegraph, citing the radio reports from East Timor, considered that 'token approaches to the UN and a cursory glance at our nearest northern foreign neighbour' were not enough and argued that the Australian Government should pursue other channels open to it, short of military intervention, to intercede.[2]

While the Age,[3] shared the views of the Daily Telegraph,[4] it put the blame for events in East Timor squarely on the shoulders of the Portuguese when it editorialized:

> It is a reality that had it not been for Portugal's scandalous dereliction of responsibility, thousands of Timorese would not have been slaughtered or driven from their homes.

Yet, it was resigned to the prospect that Timor's fate was certain to be sealed by Indonesia's actions, considering that any role for the UN was extremely doubtful. The Sydney Morning Herald expressed a similar view. It was particularly troubled by the erosion of any kind of morality. To be sure:

> Our national interest calls for a close and cordial relationship with Indonesia; high principle, for Timorese self-determination or, at the worst, freedom to settle differences without foreign military intervention. High principle is the loser....[5]

Two incidents fanned this inflamed opinion during the remainder of January -- the banning of the Age and the Sun/Herald (Melbourne)

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1 The Daily Telegraph, 5 January 1976.

2 The Sunday Telegraph, 11 January 1976.

3 The Age, 13 January 1976, 15 January 1976, and 16 January 1976.

4 The Daily Telegraph, 5 January 1976.

5 The Sydney Morning Herald, 13 January 1976.

correspondents, Michael Richardson and Bruce Wilson, and the leaking of a cable sent to Canberra by the Australian Ambassador in Indonesia, Mr. Richard Woolcott.[1]

Believed to have been decisions made at the insistence of the Indonesian Defence Department and the State Intelligence Coordinating Body (BAKIN), both Wilson and Richardson were blacklisted because their reports on the Timor conflict were considered to be biased in favour of Fretilin.[2] Richardson in particular was singled out for his dispatches, over a two-week period, on events straddling the Indonesian invasion of 7 December. It was noted by the Age that Indonesia alleged that such reporting 'stirred public opinion in Australia, creating problems for Indonesia in the context of her relationship with Australia'.[3]

The Age newspaper defended its correspondent powerfully, considering his reporting was marked by 'honesty and distinction'. Further, it considered that:

> The function of the correspondent is to report the news. If accurate and impartial reports 'stir up' public opinion, it is the newsmaker, not the newsbreaker, who should look to his conscience ... The United Nations is entitled to be extremely skeptical about protestations of good faith from a government which refuses to allow experienced and impartial correspondents to report the facts.[4]

Colin Bednall, in defence of his colleague, found Indonesia's

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1 Two further cables were leaked during the year: one in April, revealed that Woolcott was advising the government as early as July 1975 that 'we are dealing with a settled Indonesian policy to incorporate East Timor' (the Sun, 1 May 1976). In May it was leaked that Woolcott advised 'that though Australia knew Indonesia was lying in its insistence that Indonesian forces were not operating in the territory, it should not say so publicly' (Bruce Juddery, the Canberra Times, 31 May 1976).

2 The Age, 14 January 1976.

3 Ibid. Richardson considered the allegations of bias were 'vague ... but emphatically deny that my reporting of the Timor conflict has been unfair or inaccurate ... last year I spent about four weeks writing about Timor from the Portuguese side of the border [and] ... about 12 weeks looking at the situation from the Indonesian side, either in Jakarta or in Indonesian West Timor' (the Age, 14 January 1976).

4 The Age, 15 January 1976.

actions 'offensive', and drew parallels between Indonesian actions towards West Irian and those against East Timor. Critical of the Indonesian concern to liberate Portuguese Timor, Bednall, rather emotionally, told his readers 'The Timor putsch[sic] suggests that the military and commercial ambitions of the generals clustered around Suharto are not very different from those of Sukarno'.[1]

A leading article in the Canberra Times[2] by Bruce Juddery, on the eve of Peacock's visit to Jakarta, shifted public attention away from these bans towards the role of the Department of Foreign Affairs in the Timor issue, and caused a storm in the press. Woolcott, in a leaked cable, had advised Australia that:

> The emphasis should now be on accepting the inevitability of Timor's incorporation into Indonesia, letting the dust settle and looking ahead, while taking what steps we can in Australia to limit the further growth of hostility towards Indonesia within the Australian community.

Woolcott had put it to his political leaders:

> It is a choice between what might be described as Wilsonian idealism or Kissingerian realism. The former is more proper and principled but the longer-term national interest may well be served by the latter. We do not think we can have it both ways.

It seemed that pressure from the Indonesians for Australia to counter anti-Indonesian sentiments in Australia prompted the cable. Particularly offensive to the Indonesians, and gaining currency in Australia, was 'that another Vietnam is in the making in Timor',[3] and 'that Papua New Guinea and East Malaysia are next on the list and that the Indonesian invasion is analogous with the Japanese occupation of East Timor during the War'.[4] Of particular concern to the Indonesians, however, was -- using Woolcott's words -- 'whether, privately, we still sympathize with their objective, even if we cannot condone the means they have adopted in pursuit of it'.[5]

The Australian press reaction to this public ventilation of

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1 The Age, 19 January 1976.

2 The Canberra Times, 16 January 1976.

3 Woolcott's words.

4 Juddery's words.

5 The Canberra Times, 16 January 1976.

Woolcott's realpolitik was mixed. However, the leak not only generated debate, it compelled those in the press to structure their arguments within Woolcott's framework of 'Wilsonian idealism ... Kissingerian realism'. Denis Warner, for example, writing in the Courier-Mail[1] considered that although the savage fighting for East Timor was 'to be deplored', the Indonesian action in the colony had to be placed into perspective. That is, 'an independent East Timor would have been a dangerous, festering sore'. Clearly, a 'realist', Warner considered Australia faced a fait accompli in the colony, and shifted his argument towards our longer-term national interests. In essence these:

> national interest[s] now dictate that whatever our sentimental feeling for the aspirations of the Timorese people we should start rebuilding our damaged bridges with Jakarta.

Fundamental to Warner's view was Indonesia's importance to Australia's security. A friendly Indonesia would be 'a barrier on the way to Australia that any foe must cross. An unfriendly Indonesia could be a bridge across which a hypothetical enemy might one day walk'.

While Peter Hastings considered Woolcott's language to be 'pretentious', the Ambassador's advice 'made good, if unpalatable, sense.'[2] The Sydney journalist advocated an Australian acceptance of the inevitable -- an Indonesian stranglehold on the Portuguese colony. If we did not accept this and moved towards Wilsonian idealism, playing the 'highly dangerous game of gathering support regionally and in the UN for a Fretilin-dominated independent East Timor', then Australia could expect to be faced with a dependent, warring state, actively seeking tutelage from powers like China, North Vietnam and North Korea. It would also be faced with an Indonesia that 'would regard Australia with enduring resentment, as being the prime cause of its problems'. Thus, for Hastings, a 'principled' stand would embroil us in an issue that did not affect our security. Besides, 'except for humanitarian considerations, it is a bit late in the day for principles'.

Not all the press shared these blunt opinions, although most papers published letters (to the editor) which reflected similar

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[1] The Courier-Mail, 17 January 1976.

[2] The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 January 1976.

views, as well as a deepening public anger. The Age[1] found that 'the Woolcott message is a deeply disturbing document', particularly its inferences of Indonesian territorial ambitions, and that 'Canberra has been involved in an exercise of hypocritical double talk'. The editorial suggested that the real question facing Australia, was whether Australia's relationship with Indonesia was worth having if it was being built on such 'disreputable foundations'. Moreover, Australia could only succeed in provoking Indonesia's disdain if we succumbed to its demands. As it forcefully argued, reflecting on Indonesia's 'unenviable record of suppression ... a Government as well versed in realpolitik as Indonesia is more likely to regard a compliant Australia with contempt than with respect. Certainly the rest of the world will'.

The Canberra Times[2] shared these views, however, considered that while 'Great Powers may be able to afford such sophistries ... it is doubtful that 'middle powers' such as Australia can do so'. It then focused attention on the only real assets it considered Australia had -- credibility and its word. Both, it put forward, were eroded by the actions of the Whitlam and Fraser governments. Nevertheless, it believed Woolcott's suggestion that the Australian Government should take steps to manage Australian public opinion (something the Age[3] found appalling), 'a worthy purpose'.

Press reactions to the leak died down but not before the Prime Minister made his strongest public statement on Timor.[4] Whether this was what was intended by the leaking of the Woolcott cable or not, Fraser's stated opposition to the Indonesian invasion maintained the focus on Australia's East Timor policy. Much press discussion on Australian policy towards the problem of self-determination turned substantially upon the distinction between 'principle' and 'expediency'. While it caused some in the press to speculate on how far the Fraser government was prepared to go in standing in firm opposition to Indonesia, it also drew others to

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1 The Age, 20 January 1976.

2 The Canberra Times, 17 January 1976.

3 The Age, 19 January 1976, and 20 January 1976.

4 The Age, 22 January 1976.

consider Australia's narrow options in responding to the marked deterioration of the bilateral relationship. Moreover, if there was to be a rapprochement, many in the press began questioning when and how the Australian Government would reconsider its position -- recognizing Indonesian control over East Timor -- and move to patch up the relationship.[1]

In this context, the government's transparent moves towards such a reconciliation -- through the rendering of assistance to the UN special envoy,[2] its motions in the UN,[3] through its firm and unequivocal response to the Fretilin transmitter issue[4], as well as to attempts by the trade union movement and ACFOA to raise and send aid to the Fretilin-held areas of East Timor[5] -- drew sustained press coverage and debate on the true motives of the Fraser government.

Meanwhile, Peacock recovered the reins of Australia's Indonesia policy -- a policy described by the Canberra Times as:

> a 'two-level' policy ... on the one hand, and quite admirably, the Foreign Minister and his Ambassador[6] continue to insist that the people of East Timor must choose their own future and that 'all outside forces' (Mr Harry's euphemism for what Jakarta, equally euphemistically, calls 'volunteers') should be withdrawn from the territory. On the other hand, Mr Peacock goes

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1 See Peacock interviews with: Bruce Juddery, the Canberra Times, 1 March 1976; and with Peter Hastings, the Sydney Morning Herald, 1 March 1976.

2 See, for example, the Age, "UN party offers best hope", 30 January 1976; the Australian, "UN envoy gets help on Timor", 2 February 1976; the Age, "We get tough: Help envoy to reach FRETILIN, Indonesia told", 30 January 1976.

3 The Canberra Times, "Window-dressing for the public to mask the cynical realities", 30 January 1976; the Sydney Morning Herald, "Aust. policy switch over East Timor", 6 September 1976.

4 See the Age, "Timor: at last a touch of action", 30 January 1976; and the Sydney Morning Herald, "Australia will not allow new radio link", 29 January 1976; the Age, "FRETILIN Radio Link seized in Darwin", 2 October 1976.

5 The Canberra Times, 27 February 1976; the Australian, 26 April 1976; the Sydney Morning Herald, 28 April 1976; and the Canberra Times, 24 May 1976.

6 A reference to Ralph Harry, Australia's permanent representative to the UN.

> to considerable lengths ... to insist that disagreements over Timor have to be seen in perspective and certainly not as a reservation about the relationship between our two countries.[1]

While this put the Foreign Affairs Minister under intense scrutiny within the Parliament,[2] from the public[3] and from the Indonesians,[4] he sustained such a policy up to, and beyond, the Prime Minister's meeting with Suharto in Jakarta in October 1976.

The Fraser-Suharto Meeting

This meeting generated a great deal of press speculation. It centred in the main on whether or not the visit would be used as a basis for a fresh approach between the two countries, as well as to convince Australian opinion that the East Timor issue was only an aberration, and not a continuation of the days when West Irian and confrontation dominated the relationship. As Sam Lipski put it:

> Mr Fraser has the invidious task of deciding whether and how to respond to Indonesia's desire to put Timor behind us, treat the incorporation of the former colony ... as a fait accompli, and, following the dictum expounded by Mr Fraser himself that realism is the cornerstone of Australian foreign policy, accept the new realities.[5]

Generally, many in the press placed great importance on the meeting between the two leaders and saw it as an exercise in 'fence mending'.[6] Michael Richardson, in particular, considered a crisis of confidence had soured the rapport between the two men, sending the relationship between Australia and Indonesia to its lowest ebb since confrontation.[7] Thus, that realpolitik took over the issue at the talks pleased many in the Australian press. With Fraser

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1 The Canberra Times, 17 April 1976.

2 See Chapter Nine.

3 Refer to Chapters Seven and Ten.

4 See Chapter Seven.

5 The Australian, 20 September 1976.

6 The Age, 7 October 1976.

7 The Age, 5 October 1976 and 11 October 1976.

indicating that the two countries now had 'to look to the future',[1] the press interpreted the substance of the talks to have reflected an effective Australian acceptance of Indonesia's takeover of East Timor. Indeed, for the Age,[2] Mr Fraser's:

> talks have not only firmed up the government's de facto recognition of Indonesian sovereignty; they clearly raise the question, if not the prospect of early de jure recognition ... to Mr Fraser, the Timor chapter is effectively closed.[3]

Fraser's denial that this was the case upon his return -- essentially for domestic consumption -- caused consternation among the press corp, not least among those who had accompanied him to Jakarta. The feeling was evident that the Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Peacock were clearly stalling over the issue -- particularly evidenced by refusals to restate Australia's four-point policy -- and it served only to annoy the Indonesian leadership, while providing continued nourishment to Australia's vocal pro-Timorese activists.[4] While many called for a clearer statement on Australia's policy,[5] the West Australian clearly summed up the situation that had overtaken events upon Fraser's return from Jakarta:

> It is hard to say that Mr Fraser's visit to Indonesia was a diplomatic failure when each side is able to interpret his conversations there according to its own lights. That is the ultimate refuge of leaders who meet to explain mutually untenable positions.[6]

But what concerned seasoned reporters like Laurie Oakes and Doug Wilkie was that it was becoming increasingly obvious that Fraser

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1 The Age, 12 October 1976.

2 See also editorials of the Canberra Times, 11 October 1976, the Courier Mail, 11 October 1976, the Financial Review, 11 October 1976 and the Sydney Morning Herald, 12 October 1976.

3 The Age, 11 October 1976.

4 See the Advertiser, 12 October 1976; the Sydney Morning Herald, 12 October 1976 and the Canberra Times, 12 October 1976. See also strong criticism of these activists by the Age, 13 October 1976 (editorials).

5 See, for example, the Courier Mail, 13 October 1976 and the Mercury, 13 October 1976.

6 The West Australian, 13 October 1976.

was trying to indicate to the Indonesians that Australia had accepted its takeover of East Timor, while at the same time giving the impression at home that this was not the case.[1]

The parliamentary outcry generated by such a strategy[2] kept Australian policies and attitudes under the scrutiny of the press for some weeks. On one level, the charges and counter-charges that flew about the Parliament were intensely reported,[3] while on another level, broader assessments were being made on the state of the Australia-Indonesia relationship in the wake of the turbulent events of the previous year.[4] The pursuit of East Timor as an issue in this way, however (receiving political, press and public attention[5]), meant that it became a domestic political football, used principally by the political parties to criticize, embarrass or distance themselves from the major players and issues.

Through the next fourteen months to January 1978, when Australia recognized the incorporation of East Timor, the press, together with activists within the Parliament and the wider community,[6] attempted to keep Australia's East Timor policy as a live issue. The findings of James Dunn and Labor MP Gordon Bryant that the Indonesian military had committed atrocities in East Timor were widely reported in the press early in 1977[7] -- as were the

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1 See the Sun, 13 October 1976, see also Claude Forell's comments in the Age, 14 October 1976.

2 See Chapter Nine.

3 Ibid., See the Age, 14 October 1976, 15 October 1976; the Canberra Times, 14 October 1976; the Sydney Morning Herald, 14 October 1976, 15 October 1976. See also Hamish McDonald (Age, 18 October 1976) for a detailed report of Indonesia's reaction to this domestic infighting; the Courier Mail, 22 October 1976; the Canberra Times, 20 November 1976.

4 See, for example, Michael Richardson's report in the Age, 7 December 1976.

5 For example, the Fraser government's actions in closing down the telecom link with Fretilin and its abstention from the vote in the UN on the Timor issue drew a barrage of domestic criticism. See the Age, 8 November 1976 and the Sydney Morning Herald, 19 November 1976.

6 See Chapters Nine and Ten.

7 See, for example, the Sydney Morning Herald, 14 January 1977; the Australian, 20 January 1977; the West

views of people from the wider community, letters from whom were published regularly throughout the year -- and served to hinder Australian Government efforts to submerge the Timor issue.[1]

While the outcome of Dunn's representations to the US Congress was not a success,[2] Indonesia's strong reaction was of immediate interest to some in the press.[3] The Sydney Morning Herald in particular, considered it not only reflected that 'the shadow of Timor still lies across Australia-Indonesia relations' but it also was a measure of 'the failure of the policies of appeasement pursued by Mr Whitlam and Mr Fraser alike'.[4] Foreign Affairs Minister Malik's threat of reprisals against the Australian Embassy in Jakarta was considered by the Age to be nothing less than 'blackmail', highlighting the inescapable point that Malik was:

> introducing into the diplomatic sphere the very heavy-handedness that he so fiercely denies his troops used in the military sphere in their conquest of East Timor, where the deaths of five Australian[s] ... have still not been satisfactorily explained.[5]

The Dunn issue generated a flurry of letters to the editors of many Australian newspapers supporting his position, while directing criticism towards the Indonesian Government's 'temerity' and the Australian Government's 'gutlessness'.[6] Dunn's testimony to the US Congress in particular generated strong criticism of the Australian Government from the Sydney Morning Herald when, in a view similar

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Australian, 29 January 1977 and 1 February 1977.

1 The Age, 22 February 1977; the Canberra Times, 14 March 1977.

2 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.258.

3 The Age, 16 March 1977; the Canberra Times, 16 March 1977; the Sydney Morning Herald, 16 March 1977.

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 March 1977.

5 The Age, 17 March 1977. See also the Mercury, 17 March 1977; the Age, 18 March 1977.

6 The Canberra Times, 31 March 1977. (Letter from Lois M. Parker, Fisher, ACT). For alternative views see letters to the Age (24 March 1977) from John F. Henderson and from Professor Arndt (22 March 1977).

to those subsequently put forward by the Canberra Times[1] and Peter Hastings,[2] it argued:

> One does not need to dissent from the general proposition that a good relationship with Indonesia is important to feel extreme distaste at the lengths to which the Whitlam and Fraser Governments have gone in pursuit of it ... Our Indonesian policy has been conducted, and continues to be conducted, not only in a nationally humiliating way but also in a singularly unskillful and counter-productive way.[3]

Such sentiments were at the core of attempts by the Australian Journalists' Association to mount an independent inquiry into the deaths of the five journalists. In the words of the AJA Federal Executive in July 1977, it had:

> become clear that the Australian Government has no intention of conducting a serious investigation....[4]

While strong partisan debate continued, generated in the main by the leaking, yet again, of secret cables implicating Peacock in a meeting with two Indonesian officials from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies,[5] news reports on the East Timor issue quickly subsided in the remaining months of 1977. Press attention began to focus increasingly on Australia's broader relations with ASEAN,[6] the United States' Asia-Pacific policies,[7] Indo-Chinese refugees[8] and Indonesian domestic issues.[9] Moreover, by early 1978

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1 The Canberra Times, 13 April 1977.

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, "Wanting to have our cake and eat it too, over Timor" (12 April 1977) and "Combining reticence and rhetoric" (13 April 1977).

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 4 April 1977.

4 The Sun News-Pictorial, 22 July 1977.

5 The Courier Mail, 2 May 1977; the Canberra Times, 3 May 1977 and 4 May 1977; the Sydney Morning Herald, 3 May 77; the Age, 3 May 1977 and 4 May 1977; the National Times, 27 May 1977; the Sun, 4 May 1977. See also Chapter Ten.

6 The Age, 1 July 1977, 5 July 1977, 14 July 1977 and 9 August 1977.

7 The Sydney Morning Herald, 1 July 1977; the Age, 13 September 1977.

8 The Age, 8 August 1977.

a great deal of press attention was focusing enthusiastically on the re-election of President Suharto to his third presidential term. On the Australian recognition of East Timor's integration into the Indonesian Republic the Sydney Morning Herald, in one of the few, but representative, commentaries[1] made, lamented:

> Our gestures of disapproval, adequate or not, achieved nothing; our continued disapproval can change nothing - though it would harm a relationship of the utmost importance to us. Recognition may leave sour thoughts in the mind; at least it acknowledges that we must live in the world as it is ... To some it may seem that, in a conflict between principle and expedience, principle has come off worse again [but] ... in a conflict between what cannot be done and what can be done, realism has had to prevail.[2]

Conclusion

Press reporting on the East Timor issue went through a number of distinct stages. The first coincided with the period leading to and including the merger between UDT and Fretilin, and saw an increase in press interest in developments in the former Portuguese colony. The second was the period of civil war in East Timor, during which time first-hand reporting became an important source of information for Australians on events taking place in the territory. The third stage was concomitant with the Fraser period in government, straddling the October 1976 Fraser-Suharto talks, and ending with Australia's de facto recognition of East Timor's integration into the Indonesian Republic. Earliest press comment on the East Timor issue emerged through news items and the occasional editorial comment. While the former attempted to glean information about developments from the few reports available in Australia, editorial views focused on some of the early issues involved -- in particular, that of the process of decolonization. While some in the press ruled out any prospect for independence,

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9 The National Times, "Has Suharto lost the support of his Generals?", 15-20 August 1977; "Cynicism dominates Indonesia's tenth anti-corruption campaign", 24-31 October 1977.

1 See Michael Gratton, the Age, 23 January 1978; Dennis Warner, the Courier Mail, 23 February 1978; Michael Barnard, the Age, 28 January 1978.

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 January 1978.

others insisted on a decent process of self-determination for the East Timorese. At the forefront here were the Sydney Morning Herald and the Canberra Times.

In the period between the first and second Whitlam-Suharto talks, straddling the invasion scare of early 1975, it was becoming evident to the Australian press that a process of decolonization would not guarantee a smooth passage to self-determination, least of all independence. This saw a hardening of press attitudes on the East Timor issue and, through numerous articles and editorials that critically evaluated the major issues, gave rise to valuable attempts to inform domestic opinion. Fundamental to this process during this four-year period were the authoritative views of Hastings and Richardson.

Richardson's first-hand reporting was an impartial source of information, contrary to that emanating from Jakarta and Canberra about developments taking place in East Timor, especially during the civil war.[1] For his part, Hastings was at the centre of several attempts by government (in one important instance, by the Department of Defence) to manipulate developments surrounding, and public opinion concerning, East Timor.[2] In this way, the press attracted the ire of the Indonesian Government, which was taking an increasingly critical view of the tone and emphasis of Australian press reporting. While such reporting focused on developments in East Timor it also paid attention to the anti-Indonesian views of many in the Australian community.

A major development for the Australian press, however, that deeply influenced its perceptions of Indonesia's behaviour, was the deaths of the five journalists. And it emerged as a major factor in the press' continuing coverage of the East Timor issue. Yet, in the months preceding the Indonesian invasion, while the press played an important and influential role in informing the public

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1 See, for example, his article in the Age (26 November 1975) on the Indonesian attack on the East Timor town of Atabae. Indonesia continued to deny its military forces were involved in any fighting in East Timor

2 Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.283. Nicol convincingly argues that the Department of Defence used Hastings to publicize its thinking on the strategic importance of Timor to Australia, at a time when the Department was being asked to contribute little in the formulation of Australia's Timor policy.

about the issue (as well as providing a forum for debate), it could not be argued that it was able to exercise direct influence on the Whitlam government. However, the same could not be said about the post-invasion period.

Early reporting was undiscriminating, and throughout 1976 it directed criticism at the Indonesians as well as the Whitlam and Fraser governments. Questions were raised about the morality of the actions of all three governments and gave rise to speculation as to how far the Fraser government, notwithstanding its Four-Point policy, was prepared to go to acquiesce to Indonesia. Meanwhile, press attention continued to focus on developments in East Timor as well as on a deteriorating Australia-Indonesia relationship.

At the forefront were Warner and, ironically, Hastings who were less concerned about the ambiguous nature of the Fraser government's policy (unlike Oakes and Wilkie) than about restoring stability to the relationship. The continued debate in Australia, on East Timor, became of principal interest to the press (over and above developments in East Timor) and fuelled lively news and editorial opinion. This gave rise to a period in which there was considerable interplay between the press and groups and individuals in the wider community. Inevitably, press scrutiny of the Fraser government's policies became increasingly negative and eroded Australian government hopes for a public consensus on the substance and direction of its East Timor policy. In this situation, the Australian press not only defined the critical issues, but also emerged as an important component of a domestic environment that was, throughout the period under review, hostile to any kind of Australian Government accommodation of Indonesia's actions.

CHAPTER NINE

ACRIMONY AND CONFRONTATION: THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

This chapter describes and analyses the attitudes of Members of the Federal Parliament on Indonesian issues between 1974 and 1980. The principal issue examined is East Timor and, accordingly, the chapter is divided into two periods. The first, from 1974 to 1975, covers the period leading up to the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. The second covers the period of the new Fraser administration, principally up until 1978, when it extended de facto recognition of East Timor's integration into Indonesia.

While the content and style of parliamentary attitudes and opinions are studied, it is of importance also to establish the effectiveness of the collective role of Parliamentarians in the wider campaign to influence Australia's East Timor policy. While it was noted earlier that the forum of Parliament can be used by MPs seeking to influence foreign policy decisions, it remains arguable whether this has an effective impact on policy. In this context, the degree of cohesion and differences in opinion in each party and between the parties is of interest, as too is the role of the extra-parliamentary wings of the parties in the formation and criticism of policy.

A. The Pre-Invasion Imbroglio: Evolving Ideological and Politico-Strategic Perceptions

Events in Timor failed to mobilize any serious debate in the Australian Parliament before the Suharto-Whitlam talks of September 1974 in Wonosobo. Even the rise and fall of the Fretilin-UDT merger, which straddled the invasion scare of February 1975, failed to generate interest beyond that aroused by Peacock's urgency debate later that month. It took the UDT coup of 12 August, immediately prior to the opening of Parliament for the Budget session, to ignite discussion.

Early Parliamentary Activity

The Opposition's response to the outcome of the September

talks, however, was far from immediate, with the only hint of interest in developments in Portuguese Timor emerging six weeks later in October.[1] This preceded a vigorous attack, however, by Peacock on Whitlam's tardiness in acknowledging East Timor's right to self-determination. Peacock was especially critical of the hypocrisy and inconsistencies inherent in the Labor Government's tendency to call for such rights generally, only to yield to pressure from more powerful States, as was the case with the Baltic States and Soviet 'colonialism'.[2]

This drew an immediate response from Morrison,[3] who defended these charges with what was to be the first policy statement made by the government in respect of East Timor in the Australian Parliament. Morrison argued with carefully chosen words that the government's attitude on East Timor was based on UN principles as well as Australia's support for the right of self-determination. Moreover, in a signal that it did not wish to become involved in the evolving situation, Morrison put the ambiguous view that the Australian Government did:

> not seek any special position in Portuguese Timor and it believes that it is the views and attitudes of the people of Portuguese Timor that should be decisive. The Government has indicated that if the people of Portuguese Timor wish to associate themselves in some way with Indonesia, Australia would welcome this... provided ... that the decision were based on an internationally accepted act of self-determination.[4]

The Minister was joined by the ALP backbencher, C.J. Hurford[5], who was troubled by Indonesia's hardening attitude towards East Timor in the wake of the Wonosobo discussions. In what could only be viewed as an aggravation of the clear division between Whitlam and some Members in the government, Hurford referred to Adam Malik's earlier stance of non-interference, and subsequent post-discussion reports that Indonesia was looking to integration. He carefully

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1 In a question from W. Sneddon, the Leader of the Opposition, (the Liberal Member for Bruce, Victoria, and later Sir Billy) to Whitlam. CPD, H.R., Vol.91, p.2716, 22 October 1974.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.91, p.3044, 30 October 1974.

3 Ibid., pp.3045-3046.

4 Ibid., p.3046.

5 The Labor Member for Adelaide (SA). Ibid., p.3049.

and perceptively noted the role that domestic factionalism had played in this 'curious departure' from the Malik position, and the potential for problems presented by any awakening political activity in the once dormant colony. Hurford, however, was equally precise in consistently pointing to Australia's commitment to self-determination, and proceeded to play down the colony's economic unviability and, in strategic terms, its potential as a problem on the doorsteps of both Indonesia and Australia.

Although Hurford found support across the floor in the Opposition backbencher J. Corbett,[1] the issue quickly foundered. Timor was raised only once during the remainder of the session,[2] with attention given to other Indonesian matters. Inevitably, frustration crept into the Opposition's attempts to generate debate, not only on the East Timor issue, but on foreign policy matters generally. This was particularly noticeable in a speech in mid-November by a former diplomat, D.M. Connolly[3]. In a complaint that was to arise on many occasions over the next year, he put it to the House of Representatives that although in the history of Australia:

> There has always been an unfortunate tendency to delude ourselves into believing that Australia can stand aloof and shut herself away from the world's problems ... it is the responsibility of all governments, regardless of their political colour to ensure that they bring to the attention of the Australian people, through the Australian Parliament, the activities, the problems and the solutions which the government of the day sees as being best fitted to the interests of this nation.

Although it had been in power for nearly two years, apart from sporadic comments by Morrison on a variety of foreign policy issues, the Whitlam Government made only one foreign policy statement to the House of Representatives.[4] Despite the fact that the Foreign Minister was seated in the Senate, the opportunity to

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1 The Country Party Member for Maranoa (Queensland). CPD, H.R., Vol.91, p.3030, 30 October 1974.

2 Questions put to Whitlam (Minister representing the Foreign Affairs Minister) from Peacock on Australian Government consultations over the future of Portuguese Timor (Ibid., p.3135), and the visit to Australia by Fretilin leader, Ramos Horta (Ibid.).

3 Ibid., Vol.91, p.3437, 13 November 1974.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.84, pp.2643-2651, 24 May 1973.

debate the East Timor issue in the Senate was not taken up by the Opposition.[1] This situation, however, meant that Willesee had to respond to only one question in the Senate on East Timor in 1974.[2] On the evidence it seems that the government's circumspection in the Parliament was an attempt to keep tight constraints on the issue, and although Fretilin's Ramos Horta timed his visit to coincide with the sitting of the Australian Parliament, it seems, if parliamentary activity was any guide, that the Government had achieved its aim.

The Invasion Scare

The first parliamentary session of 1975 followed the merger between Fretilin and UDT, straddled the invasion scare and the second Whitlam-Suharto meeting, and ended before the UDT coup of August 1975. While the merger threatened to erode Australian and Indonesian policies, and coincided with strengthening political support within Timor for independence over self-determination, it failed to generate any interest in the Australian Parliament. It took Peter Hastings' revelation in February, that the Indonesian Government was proposing a military solution to developments in East Timor,[3] to provoke any kind of reaction on East Timor. The Opposition launched a scathing attack on the government and its apparently equivocal attitude towards the future of the Portuguese colony. At the forefront, and regaining his earlier momentum, was Peacock. He was particularly critical of the Whitlam government's 'failure to take urgent action to ensure a solution in accordance with the wishes of the local people and in the interests of the region'.[4] Moreover, Peacock claimed that Whitlam had compromised Australia's position in his talks with Suharto, and accused the

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1 For an analysis of the influence of the Senate on foreign policy-making during the Whitlam government period, see Albinski, H.S., Australian External Policy Under Labor, pp.278-279. Albinski notes that Labor did not hold a majority in the Senate, however, the Opposition used the Senate to distract the government on predominantly internal policy subjects.

2 Question from Senator J.A. Mulvihill (ALP, NSW) on the issue of self-determination and the attitudes of the protagonist parties (CPD, Senate, S.62, p.2182, 31 October 1974).

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 February 1975.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.93, p.640, 25 February 1975.

Prime Minister of having given approval for Indonesia to take over East Timor.[1]

In reply, Morrison said that Australia believed the people of Portuguese Timor should be allowed to make their own choice about their future. However, in a movement away from his earlier position, he considered that it was not yet time for an act of self-determination. In a speech remarkably similar to his statement to the House of Representatives four months earlier, Morrison insisted that Australia continued to have no 'special interest' in developments in East Timor, yet indicated it had been in close contact with both Indonesia and Portugal about the future of the colony. Furthermore, he postulated that the Australian Government's position was clear and well understood by Indonesia; and that Australia would be seriously concerned if there was any unilateral action by Indonesia which could prevent an act of self-determination.[2] While Morrison was particularly critical of Peacock's motives in prompting the debate -- charging that his actions were 'a cheap political gimmick', subverting the close and delicate negotiations in which Australia was engaged with both Indonesia and Portugal[3] -- it appeared to have succeeded in forcing the Government's hand when, in a reference to the 'natural interests of Indonesia', Morrison stressed the importance of Indonesia's concerns in the matter.[4]

Whitlam was not present during this debate. While he was said to have been preoccupied with other matters, the official reason for Morrison's presence was that the Minister for Science had spoken on the matter of East Timor before. The Prime Minister, however, did not want to enter the fray. It would not only have upgraded a sensitive situation that he wanted contained and resolved, but also added fuel to the fire of confusion that

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1 Ibid., p.641. A point taken up strongly and without compromise by Sinclair in a subsequent speech, Ibid., p.646.

2 Ibid., p.644. This argument was taken up by a subsequent ALP speaker, M. Cross, and indicated the growing number of Government MPs who did not share the Prime Minister's stance on this issue.

3 Ibid., p.645.

4 Ibid., p.644.

embraced not only Australian policy makers, but also their Indonesian observers. Notably, while the urgency debate petered out, this activity in the Parliament revealed that there was a widening division in the higher echelons of the government on this issue, with differences emerging in particular between Whitlam and his Foreign Affairs spokespersons in both parliamentary Chambers -- Willesee, Wriedt[1] and Morrison. In the course of the first half of 1975, Whitlam was seemingly at pains to contain the issue in perhaps the only forum he was able to do -- the Parliament. While other arenas were erupting, including the Labor Caucus and the community (see next Chapter), Whitlam chose to ride out the storm until the Parliament went into recess in July.[2]

In the meantime a delegation from the Labor Caucus' Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee visited Timor. One of two delegations to the colony that month (the other was organized by the CIET; see Chapter Ten) it was led by Kerin, and included Messrs Clayton, Fry and Gunn from the House of Representatives and Senators Gieltzelt and Mackintosh. Although hosted mainly by Fretilin leaders, the delegation met with the leaders of each

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[1] In the Senate, Senator K.S. Wriedt was fielding a barrage of questions from the Opposition in its efforts to obtain information on the reports of an impending invasion,[1] to pressure the government for a clear statement of policy,[2] as well as to focus specifically on inadequacies in the government's position.[3] Throughout, Wriedt held firm to the view that Australia's policy was, and had always been 'for a measured self-determination for Timor'.[4] Whether Wriedt had a sound understanding of developments in East Timor, or was simply following Whitlam's lead, and keeping a tight rein on information, was less than clear.[5]

1. Questions from Senator J.C. Carrick (Lib, SA) and Sir Magnus Cormack to Wriedt, CPD, Senate, Vol.S.63, 26 February 1975, pp.385 and 444.
2. Question from Senator A.G. Poyser (ALP, Victoria) to Wriedt, Ibid., 6 March 1975, p.705.
3. Question from Senator Sir Magnus Cormack (Lib, Victoria) to Wriedt, Ibid., 27 February 1975, p.519.
4. Ibid., 6 March 1975, p.705.
5. Question from Senator Sir Magnus Cormack (Lib, Victoria) to Wriedt, Ibid., 26 February 1975, p.444. In this regard see Ibid., Vol.S.65, 27 August 1975, p.280 Question from Liberal Senator, Carrick; Ibid., 28 August 1975, p.359; Ibid., 11 September 1975, p.741, Question from CP Senator, Maunsell. For a clear example of Foreign Minister Willesee's inability to answer, see Ibid., 30 September 1975, p.776. (Question from Sir Magnus Cormack).

[2] The House of Representatives went into recess on 9 July and the Senate on 22 July 1975.

aspiring party within East Timor. It also had discussions with Portuguese officials, including the Governor who requested the Australian Government to reopen its consulate. During discussions with the Foreign Affairs Minister and representatives from his department upon their return, the delegation called for Australian assistance for the Timorese and the setting up of an Australian-Timorese Friendship Society.[1] Through a letter from Senator Gietzelt,[2] it also called for the reopening of the consulate. One of the delegation, Ken Fry, held the firm view that the coalition between UDT and Fretilin commanded strong support among the East Timorese and that the flurry of activity in Australia crystallized by the February invasion scare had so influenced the Indonesians that it seemed highly unlikely that they would resort to the use of force in the imposition of a solution.[3] None of these arguments, however, impressed Whitlam.

If there were any doubts that the Australian Government would shift on this issue then more were to arise following the second talks between Whitlam and Suharto held in Townsville in early April 1975. Neither leader gave the media an account of the discussions that took place, but both pronounced themselves 'satisfied' with them, although the Australian and Indonesian policy positions were no nearer to a resolution of the inherent conflict between integration and self-determination. Whatever the precise terms of the understanding that was reached in Townsville, as we noted earlier, a significant change was apparent before the end of the month in the Indonesian attitude to the coalition parties. By the end of May, six weeks after UDT and Fretilin leaders had visited Jakarta, and one month before the scheduled talks in Macao on the decolonization process, UDT withdrew from the coalition for unspecified reasons.[4] The talks represented the penultimate attempt by Portugal to maintain control over the Timorese decolonization process. However, boycotted by Fretilin, essentially in a reaction to the collapse of the coalition, they proved unable to solve the now seriously mounting obstacles to

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1 The Australian, 24 March 1975.

2 The Australian, 4 April 1975.

3 Viviani, N., "Australians and The Timor Issue", p.211.

4 See pp.302-307, Chapter Seven.

Portugal's plans for decolonization.

These events straddled, as detailed earlier, a period of intensifying Indonesian pressures involving, on one level, broadcasts over Radio Kupang, following UDT's withdrawal from the coalition, alleging that both Fretilin and UDT were communists and, on another, the temporary banning of journalists from entering Indonesian Timor. By the end of July, tensions intensified with renewed inter-party strife in Timor following the failure of the Macao talks. Indonesian pressure on Timor politics continued and the scene was set for a prolonged struggle of attrition. On 12 August, UDT mounted its ill-fated coup. The day after its 30th Anniversary independence celebrations on 17 August, Indonesian spokespersons began to promote the unequivocal theme that Indonesia had a 'moral obligation' in East Timor, citing the civil disturbances that Malik had long said would not be tolerated by the Indonesian Government.

This, then, was the scene that greeted the opening of Parliament in August 1975. Within a few days both chambers were in an uproar over these developments, and this intensity was sustained until the dismissal of the Whitlam government on 11 November.

The Post-UDT Coup Debates

On 26 August, a day after the decisive counter-offensive by Fretilin, prodding by Mulvihill and Maunsell in the Senate[1] and Fraser and Sinclair in the House of Representatives,[2] preceded a statement by Whitlam[3] in response to the changing situation in East Timor, as well as to pressures within the ALP and, more broadly, in the Australian community (see below). While Whitlam stated that the Australian Government stood ready to contribute to any practicable humanitarian action, it remained:

> opposed to Australian military involvement, ... does not regard itself as party principal [and] ... continue[s] to hold that the future of the territory is a matter for resolution by Portugal and the Timorese people themselves with Indonesia also occupying an important place because

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1 CPD, S.65, 19 August 1975, p.17; Ibid., 26 August 1975, p.200; Ibid., 26 August 1975, p.205.

2 Ibid., H.R., Vol.96, pp.483 and 486, 26 August 1975.

3 Simultaneously read in the Senate by Senator Wriedt, Ibid., Senate, S.65, 26 August 1975, pp.215-217.

of its predominant interest.

Moreover, with regard to the belief that Australia should arbitrate between the conflicting parties, bearing in mind the welfare of the Timorese people:

> the government does not think these views reflect the best approach for Australia. It believes that acceptance of these views could lead to a situation where Australia was exercising a quasi-colonial role in Portuguese Timor and might lead to the point ... where we were assuming some de facto responsibility for the territory.

Finally, Whitlam considered that the responsibility for bringing an end to the conflict rested with Portugal. In the government's view, 'Portugal cannot simply wash its hands of Portuguese Timor'.[1]

Clearly, Whitlam had not moved from the position he had adopted in the first Whitlam-Suharto talks, eleven months earlier. But more than this, he was making it implicitly clear that Indonesia's interests transcended those of the Timorese people. In this context, Whitlam was not only prepared to continue to call on the ineffective Portuguese Government to resolve the crisis, but also to rule out any kind of Australian role in, for example, a negotiated ceasefire between the warring parties in East Timor.

This particularly angered Peacock who, in his reply, accused the government of washing its hands of the Timor situation. However, although suggesting a role for ASEAN and advocating Australian support for the matter if brought before the UN, the shadow Foreign Affairs Minister did not put forward an Opposition policy on East Timor. Instead, while agreeing with Whitlam's point relating to Australian military intervention, he was guarded in his remarks, and engaged only in low-key criticism of the government's handling of the problem.[2]

While there seemed to be a convergence in the positions adopted by Whitlam and Peacock, it also seemed that there were elements from both sides of the House of Representatives that were having difficulty in reconciling their views of where solutions lay to the whole problem of East Timor. Others, predominantly in the Opposition, were poised to exploit the Timorese tragedy for domestic political advantage. Yet, there were also those who sensed that the issues involved were rather too serious for

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.96, p.492, 26 August 1975.

2 Ibid., H.R., Vol.96, pp.509-511, 26 August, 1975.

partisan politics. Of those searching for a solution, R.I. Vines[1] and Drs. J.F. Cairns[2] and R.E. Klugman[3] pressed strongly for further information. In strongly worded questions to the Prime Minister they continued to argue, nevertheless, in the name of humanitarianism, for the right of the Timorese people to choose their future -- as did Morrison, Gietzelt and Fry.[4]

Conflicting Interpretations

Those who exploited this situation introduced a completely new strain into the Opposition's criticisms which compel closer analysis. With the support of J.M. Fraser, the National Country Party leader, J.D. Anthony raised, in a question to Whitlam, the spectre of a communist takeover in Timor. The NCP leader seemed to have the moral support, if not the active encouragement of the new Opposition leader when he unveiled to the House of Representatives his vision of a communist coup in the Portuguese colony.[5] Fraser, in an obvious attempt at sabre-rattling, reviving the politics of fear that had worked so well for the coalition in the past, put it to the Parliament:

> Is he [Mr Whitlam] concerned at all at the possible establishment of communist control in Portuguese Timor so close to Australia?[6]

In terms of the cautious approach taken by Peacock to date, this was a blow. It not only undermined that approach, it also exposed the Opposition to the possibility of being committed to an interpretation of the struggle in East Timor as one between communist and anti-communist forces -- an interpretation which the Opposition Foreign Affairs spokesperson had not been willing to

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1 The Liberal Member for Stirling (WA), Ibid., pp.564-565, 27 August 1975.

2 The Labor Member for Lalor (Victoria), Ibid., p.565.

3 The Labor Member for Prospect (NSW), Ibid., p.574.

4 Harris, personal interview with Fry, November 1981.

5 CPD, H.R., Vol.96, p.685, 28 August 1975.

6 Ibid., p.689.

embrace.[1]

Anthony's criticisms brought a stinging reply from Whitlam and, repeating a challenge which government members had directed to Peacock during the previous Tuesday's debate, asked:

> Do honourable members [of the Opposition] suggest that we should put troops into Portuguese Timor ... that we should offer an army and a police force to Portugal ... that we should afford a proxy army and a proxy police force in Portuguese Timor?[2]

While Anthony, in response to Whitlam's pointed challenge in the House of Representatives, had not suggested that Australia intervene militarily in the colony, he did not scotch the suggestion either. In an interjection that highlighted the rift in the Opposition (between Anthony and Peacock in particular), Anthony was stung to reply, 'You will wait and do nothing, will you?'[3]

Anthony's interpretation in the House of Representatives caught many within the Opposition ranks by surprise, and his subsequent comments outside the Parliament pleased few.[4] He found it 'frightening' that there was a prospect that Portuguese Timor could turn communist, and advocated a three-way diplomacy between Indonesia, Australia and Portugal to enable a preliminary peacekeeping force to go into the colony. This would stop the fighting, and pave the way for UN forces, who could hold the situation on the island until the Timorese people were able to exercise self-determination. Anthony also embraced the notion of joint Australian-Indonesian intervention, indicating that Portugal

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1 Peacock made reference to the question of communist influence in his speech, on 26 August 1975, in very cautious terms, suggesting that it was made more out of deference to the susceptibilities of some of his colleagues, than to any firmly held beliefs he himself had. (CPD, H.R., Vol.96, p.509, 26 August 1975).

2 Ibid., p.686, 28 August 1975.

3 Ibid. In the debate on the previous Tuesday, Peacock received a similar challenge from government backbencher, Dr R.T. Gunn (Kingston, SA) when he questioned whether Peacock was advocating military intervention in East Timor. Peacock stated flatly that, 'the use of force by Australia in Timor or anywhere else is currently a non-question' (Ibid., p.509, 26 August 1975).

4 Harris, personal interviews with former Prime Ministers Gorton and, surprisingly, McMahon.

had clearly signalled its agreement with this course of action.[1]

In making these comments, Anthony went as close as anyone in the Opposition to supporting Australian military intervention outside the machinery of the UN. His rationale lay in a preoccupation with security, and the prospects of the East Timor situation unsettling the political and strategic situation in the region.[2] However, in relation to intervention, he was clearly out of step with Peacock, who made reference to Communism in the 26 August debate in the following terms:

> the Opposition recognizes the basis of genuine concern on the part of Indonesia in terms of the turmoil in Portugal itself, in Angola and now in East Timor which forms part of the island archipelago of Indonesia, as well as in terms of the Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean and the Sino-Soviet rivalry in Southeast Asia.[3]

His statement was carefully encased in terms related to the Opposition's appreciation of Indonesian fears, while Anthony spoke of his own. Moreover, Peacock moved to differentiate between Soviet and Chinese Communism -- something lacking from Anthony's outlook.

While there had always been those in the Opposition parties who felt compelled to reduce every issue to black and white -- characterized a combination of political opportunism and ideological obscurantism -- it is arguable that Peacock and Anthony shared the same motives. It would be tempting to characterize this rattling of sabres as an attempt to massage the politics of fear that had remained dormant for some years. On the other hand, while the prospect of an independent East Timor -- with ties to China or the Soviet Union -- was causing Indonesia great concern, the question remained as to whether this concern could be accepted as justification for unilateral military intervention. To accept it would be to turn one's back on past Australian decisions not to accept that Indonesian actions could be justified by claims of a threat to its security or that of the region (for example, the incorporation of Sarawak and Sabah in the Malaysian Federation, and

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1 The Sydney Morning Herald, 29 August 1975; the Canberra Times, 29 August 1975.

2 The Canberra Times, 29 August 1975. Anthony expressed concern at the possibility of another Soviet naval base being established in the Indian Ocean area.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.96, p.509, 26 August 1975.

confrontation), thus posing a dangerous if not subversive precedent. Clearly, however, these events brought out an old division within the Opposition parties over foreign policy, which, as long as Whitlam chose not to put the fears of the conservatives to rest, threatened to continue while the Timor conflict remained unresolved.

In the meantime, the lines of debate in Australia had hardened. While Australian domestic criticism of Whitlam's stand mounted (see later), it was sporadic and lacked the same intensity within the Parliament. The Prime Minister continued to fend off questions related to the conflict that continued in East Timor, reaffirming his position early in September.[1] He was to stand by it until the domestic events of early November which saw his government dismissed on 11 November 1975. Throughout this final period, Whitlam also expressed strong objections to the 'communist' tag that had been attached to Fretilin,[2] with support from Kerin who argued that to say so was not only 'stupid, it is dangerous and it is wrong'.[3] As Whitlam put it:

> nothing could be better calculated to stir suspicion and to arouse preventive action by some of our neighbours ... If honourable gentlemen opposite wish to arouse fears and to stir action by Indonesia they are going the right way about it. If there is a reaction by Indonesia, then Australians can thank [Fraser and Anthony]... for branding any incoming administration in Timor as communist. I cannot imagine anything more irresponsible, more against Australia's interests, more against the interests of other countries in the region and ... the people of Timor themselves.[4]

Meanwhile, during late August-early September, important changes had taken place in East Timor. As we noted earlier, Fretilin consolidated its position militarily and announced a de facto

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1 Ibid., p.825, 2 September 1975.

2 Ibid., p.824, 2 September 1975; Ibid., p.1390, 30 September 1975.

3 Labor Member for Macarthur (NSW), Ibid., p.784, 28 August 1975.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.96, pp.824-825, 2 September 1975. Peacock attempted to dilute the ideological tenor of the debate in early October, although he maintained his criticism of Whitlam's contradictory attitude to the Timor problem, while pointing out the firming divisions within the government ranks (Ibid., Vol.97, pp.1659-1660, 20 October 1975).

administration, as the remnants of Portugal's colonial administration departed. Then, towards the end of September, UDT and Apodeti merged to form the Anti-Communist Revolutionary Movement (MAC) and were duly embraced by Indonesia. From this point on, the die appeared to be cast. By early October it was clear that Indonesia was militarily active in East Timor,[1] and pressures were mounting in Australia for the Whitlam Government to mediate, as students, trade unions, church people, aid organizations and Members of Parliament engaged in demonstrations and protests against both Indonesian activities and Australian policies (see later). Central here were the tragic deaths of the five journalists, and official attitudes to the affair.

Deaths of the Journalists

An important indication that the Whitlam government was obdurately committed to the course it had chosen was in its initial response to the deaths in mid-October of five Australian-based journalists at Balibo.[2] Australian Embassy officials, R. Johnson and J. Starey, were despatched to Timor on 17 and 20 October 1975, respectively. The former went to recover the bodies and to gather details of the tragedy, although he did not manage to go farther than Kupang and could not establish the facts surrounding the incident.[3]

While Starey managed to reach Dili, he, too, was unable to gather any information. Although Foreign Affairs Minister Willesee set this investigative process in motion on 17 October --a process that involved Ambassador Woolcott securing Malik's cooperation in unearthing details of the deaths[4] -- Whitlam publicly persisted with the view that the government had no knowledge of any military

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1 See Chapter Seven.

2 "Australian Journalists in Timor", Backgrounder, Department of Foreign Affairs, 24 October 1975, p.15. The deaths of these journalists created considerable interest for some time; although based on circumstantial evidence, accounts meriting examination are Jolliffe, J., "How did these Australians Die?", the National Times, 8-13 March 1976, and Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.166 ff.

3 The Age, 23 October 1975.

4 Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.234.

activity on the part of Indonesia in the territory.[1] In the meantime public pressure was mounting for a clarification of the circumstances surrounding the deaths, and for stronger government action (see later).[2] This, together with a widening perception that the Indonesians were militarily active in East Timor, and deepening (and broadening) public and political opinion, exerted pressure on Foreign Affairs Minister Willesee, on 30 October 1975, to review Australia's policy on Timor.

Up until that time, and since Whitlam's 26 August statement on Australia's position on Timor (read simultaneously by Wriedt in the Senate), the Senate's activities had been overshadowed by the tumultuous events taking place in the House of Representatives. Nevertheless, Opposition Senators experienced the same frustrations as their party colleagues in the other chamber in securing information on, and Australia's policy towards, events in

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.97, pp.2296-2297, 21 October 1975, in response to a question from Fry, the Labor Member for Fraser (ACT). A third attempt was not mounted until April 1977, with two unnamed diplomats reporting in June that they 'did not uncover any information that adds significantly to that already available to the government'. On the fate of the territory, the two diplomats were more certain when they concluded that 'Integration (with Indonesia) appears to be clearly an irreversible fact'. (East Timor: Officials' report, Backgrounder, Department of Foreign Affairs, No.94, 24 June 1977, pp.7-9). This was unacceptable to the Australian Journalists' Association, which felt it had 'become clear that the Australian Government has no intention of conducting a serious investigation of its own' into evidence the AJA itself had gathered, and called on the International Commission of Jurists to assist in an enquiry. It also advocated the appointment of an Australian jurist to handle an investigation, to be funded by the media barons (the Sun (Melbourne), 22 July 1977; the Age, 27 July 1977).

2 The Department of Foreign Affairs itself noted at the end of October, 'Statements have been made to the effect that the Australian Government and the Department of Foreign Affairs have been unconcerned or inactive regarding the case of the five Australian journalists, missing believed killed in Balibo, East Timor.' Department of Foreign Affairs, "Report Outlinging Investigation into Deaths of Five Television Reporters in Balibo, East Timor", Canberra, 31 October 1975, quoted in Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.237.

Portuguese Timor. However, one issue -- that of refugees -- dominated the Senate during September, with Senator J. McClelland bearing the brunt of Opposition probing. Whether it was due to Sir Magnus Cormack's criticism relating to Willesee's absence from the Parliament during the unfolding of events in East Timor, or the shift in Senate interest as it heightened in October -- particularly in relation to the journalists' deaths -- Willesee chose to remain in Australia, lifting the burden from Wriedt and McClelland in accounting for events in East Timor, in absorbing Australian domestic reactions and in defending the government's policy. In any event, the deaths of the journalists was to have a profound effect on the Foreign Affairs Minister who, in his 30 October statement, delivered the Whitlam government's first criticism of Indonesia's role and actions in East Timor.[1]

The matter of the journalists was first raised in the Senate on 21 October 1975 by Senator A.G. Poyser[2], in an attempt to pry information from the government on vague reports that Australian television crews were missing in East Timor. Willesee's response was similar, in almost all respects, to the one given by Whitlam in the House of Representatives earlier that same day, and therefore was no more informative, except in one respect. The Foreign Affairs Minister indicated that, in keeping with government procedures, warnings had been issued to the pilots of the aircraft chartered by the Channel 7 and Channel 9 crews -- those reported

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1 In response to a question from the writer as to whether or not the Whitlam government ever signalled to the Indonesians a distancing between Australia and Indonesia, the former Foreign Affairs Minister indicated that no such signal was given. He believed it unlikely that 'Whitlam would have tolerated any signal to be made clear to Suharto'. (Harris, correspondence with Willesee, November 1986). Dr. Viviani, however, his private secretary at the time, considered Willesee's 30 October statement was such a signal, and one that had to be given publicly because Australia's Ambassador, Woolcott, would not give it privately. (Harris, interview with Viviani, Brisbane, November 1986). That the Whitlam government did distance itself from the Suharto regime in 1974 was a theme pursued by J.A.C. Mackie in "Australia-Indonesia relations" Current Affairs Bulletin, 1 October 1976, p.17. In fact, Mackie indicated to the author that Woolcott had told him that he (Woolcott) was so instructed, at the political level.

2 ALP, Victoria, CPD, Senate, S.66, 21 October 1975, pp.1248-1249.

missing.[1] An indication of the fate of the journalists was again asked of Willesee, but not before criticism from the Liberal's Senator Missen on the inadequate level of information that was reaching the Parliament on the turmoil in East Timor.[2] It was at this point that Willesee's impressions of events of the previous eighteen months were revealed when he told the chamber:

> It is now well over 12 months since I first started talking to Dr Mario Soares at the United Nations. The situation has gone through a lot of stages ... in which I think a lot of the parties have acted very unwisely. If cool had been maintained and the original Portuguese idea had been followed of setting up a constituent assembly, moving into a parliamentary situation and then abiding by what the Timorese people said ... without interference ... that would have been the sensible course.[3]

Of the whole deteriorating situation, and the disappearance of the journalists he concluded:

> It is a very difficult and a very sad situation. We are all upset, and nobody more than I, over the disappearance of Australians. When you are in the box seat these things are just not nice to deal with.

By the end of the month, it had become clear in the Parliament that the journalists were Australian, and that they had perished on either the 15 or 16 October. Moreover, a number of disturbing accounts had come to light as to the circumstances surrounding their deaths.[4] This gave rise, on 29 and 30 October, to a battery of questions,[5] prompting the Foreign Affairs Minister to make his ministerial statement to the Parliament on the afternoon of 30 October.

In what was described as 'a welcome step towards reality' and 'a conditional rebuke' to Indonesia,[6] Willesee put it to the

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1 CPD, Senate, S.66, 21 October 1975, p.1249.

2 Ibid., 23 October 1975, pp.1423-1424.

3 CPD, Senate, S.66, 23 October 1975, p.1424.

4 Reflected in questions from Senators G.S. Davidson (Liberal, SA) and A.T. Gieltzelt (Labor, NSW), Ibid., 29 October, pp.1530-1532.

5 See, for example, question from Senator Carrick regarding the 'overt or covert support' - both politically and militarily - within Australia for Fretilin (Ibid., 30 October, pp.1598-1599; question from Senator D.J. Grimes (ALP, Tasmania), Ibid., p.1600.

6 The Canberra Times, 31 October 1975.

Parliament that, were all the parties to wish it, the Whitlam Government would be prepared to offer an Australian venue for roundtable talks. However, not before indicating that:

> the Government has viewed with concern widespread reports that Indonesia is involved in military intervention in Portuguese Timor [but]... the position of the Australian Government is clear. We deplore the fighting and ... believe that a solution to the problems in Portuguese Timor should be sought through peaceful means and free of external intervention.

The Foreign Affairs Minister indicated that it had been pointed out to Indonesia that the Australian Government held firmly to these views, and that Indonesia had been urged to pursue its interests through diplomatic means. Moreover, Willesee added his long held view that 'Portugal's inability, or reluctance to retain control opened the way to a struggle for supremacy among a number of essentially immature, rival political factions'. The Foreign Affairs Minister concluded with the caveat:

> It is in this situation of drift ... that we view the various policy pronouncements, newspaper reports and the like from Jakarta and Timor itself. Were there substance in these reports, the Australian Government would be extremely disappointed, and we have so informed the Indonesian authorities.[1]

In what was the last substantial statement the Australian Government made on the East Timor issue,[2] Willesee had moved away from his former tacit position towards a stronger affirmation of the principle of self-determination. According to his private secretary,[3] the Australian Foreign Affairs Minister favoured taking a stronger public stand. However, he was hamstrung by three elements: an awareness that there would be resistance from his Prime Minister; 'by Department of Foreign Affairs advice that it was impolitic to confirm reports of Indonesian military involvement

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1 CPD, Senate, S.66, 30 October 1975, pp.1609-1610. Quoted in part by Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.220. Also quoted, more fully, by Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.256.

2 While Willesee continued to respond to questions in the Senate as they related to subsequent events in the territory, the issue was never raised again in the House of Representatives following Whitlam's response to Fry on 21 October 1975. (CPD, H.R., Vol.97, p.2296, 21 October 1975).

3 Viviani, N., "Australians and The Timor Issue", p.220.

when the Indonesians were busy denying such reports'; and by the actions of Australia's Ambassador Woolcott, who had earlier delivered the statement to Indonesian authorities without the crucial leading paragraph, which was critical of Indonesian intervention in Timor. In the words of the Ambassador, and reflecting the government's rationale for its policies in the preceding twenty months, such a statement had the potential 'to stir up a hornet's nest in Australia ... as well as producing a cold reaction [in Indonesia]...'. While he stressed that the paragraph could 'stimulate hostility to Indonesia within the Australian community, which has been our policy to minimize,' Woolcott was particularly concerned that 'If the Minister said or implied in public the Indonesian Government was lying we would invite a hurt and angry reaction'.[1]

B. The Fraser Administration: Growing Hostility and a Hardening of Attitudes

In early May 1976, Senator Arthur Gietzelt informed the chamber:

> I think it is a matter of regret that on the question of East Timor... we have not debated or publicly aired the views that each of us may have on the developments and the tragic events that have taken place there over the last few months... for never in modern history have an indigenous people been treated as brutally and found themselves outside the normal channels of assistance which is available to most other people and countries.[2]

Indeed, up until that day, when the New South Wales Senator initiated an emergency debate on East Timor, the parliamentary forum had been relatively restrictive. Yet, throughout the first session of the Thirtieth Parliament of 1976, there had been attempts to generate debate, paralleling deepening divisions in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, over five distinct issues: self-determination for the East Timorese, the UN's role (including such humanitarian issues as aid and refugees), the deaths of the five Australian journalists, and Indonesian and Australian policies on East Timor.

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1 This was part of a cable, sent by Woolcott to the Foreign Affairs Department in Canberra, which was leaked and examined in the Canberra Times (31 May 1976) by Bruce Juddery. Quoted more fully in Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.257.

2 CPD, Senate, S.68, 5 May 1976, p.1533.

Deepening Divisions

The East Timor issue under the new Fraser government first came under the scrutiny of the House of Representatives in mid-February. In a response to that aspect of the Governor-General's speech related to foreign policy, Liberal backbencher D.M. Connolly[1] introduced two themes. The first concerned the increasing Soviet presence in Australia's primary area of interest, Southeast Asia. The second related to the Fraser government's inheritance of a ''no win' situation' in Timor, and one created by a Labor Prime Minister prepared to acquiesce to the Indonesians.[2] These two themes dominated the debate in the House of Representatives in the months ahead, while variations in detail and modifications were evident in the Senate. In their broadest interpretation, these themes often converged, submerging the Australian parliamentary debate into the party political fighting reminiscent of the Vietnam days.

An early example of this was provided by Dr P.A. Richardson, a newly elected Liberal backbencher from Western Australia.[3] In an indictment of the Whitlam government's foreign and defence policies, he was critical of the role that ideological considerations played in such policies. Richardson considered that in possessing an 'idealistic, unrealistic, optimistic and, worst of all, simplistic world view', the Labor government had ignored the realities of an increasing Soviet presence in the region and of the Timor crisis, 'the first shattering of any dream that Australia faced a long-term period of tranquility'. Richardson then moved quickly to mesh the two with his view that:

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1 Member for Bradfield, NSW. CPD, H.R., Vol.98, p.76, 18 February 1976.

2 In the Senate, the Liberal Member for the ACT, Senator J.W. Knight was more circumspect, stressing the intention of the new government to pursue 'a balanced and realistic foreign policy', including initiatives in the United Nations to end the 'bloodshed' in East Timor. Fundamentally, and reflecting a view held by other government backbenchers, while he considered Indonesia was of great importance to Australia, the new government's 'commitment to fundamental rights and freedom' should not be overshadowed by the relationship (CPD, Senate, S.67, 18 February 1976, p.43.).

3 Liberal Member for Tangney, WA. Ibid., H.R., Vol.98, pp.442-443, 2 March 1976.

> It has been fortunate for us that others prevented East Timor becoming a bankrupt socialist coconut republic, probably dependent upon Russian aid that would be offered in return for naval facilities and other concessions. The implications for the security of Indonesia and Australia would, to say the least, have been disturbing if this scenario had unfolded... It does not need great perception to see the potential tragedy of East Timor fulfilled there a dozen times over, with totalitarian economic sinkholes ruled by Soviet catspaws threatening the stability and democratic institutions of their more stable and developing neighbours, both black and white.[1]

In his first statement to the Parliament on foreign policy matters, the new Foreign Affairs Minister, Peacock took the opportunity to address these concerns, as well as the tenor of this emerging debate. While only brief, he put the government's four-point policy on Timor,[2] and assured the House of Representatives that he had conveyed it to his counterpart in Jakarta in mid-January. While he reassured the Parliament that the Australia-Indonesia relationship could absorb 'the existence of quite serious differences',[3] Peacock's greatest concern was that the Timor debate had become an ideological dispute.

While Peacock expressed his regret at such a development, -- as he had when Fraser and Anthony raised the spectre of Communism seven months earlier[4] -- it did not put a brake on other government members. J.R. Martyr,[5] in a shift of focus, turned to the 'Timor moratorium' which concerned him, not only because:

> This stalking horse is from the same stable as the Vietnam moratorium which turned our streets into centres of violence and potential violence, where political power was exerted through sheer weight of an ostensible non-violence [sic] that was both aggressive and essentially corrupt....

but also because it represented 'another attempt on the part of Communism in this country to take foreign policy decisions out of the hands of the properly elected Government and into the streets

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.98, p.442, 2 March 1976.

2 Ibid., p.568, 4 March 1976.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.98, p.569, 4 March 1976.

4 See Chapter Seven.

5 The Liberal Member for Swan, WA. CPD, H.R., Vol.98, pp.922-924, 23 March 1976.

and the backrooms of the Left'.[1] In what was an adjournment debate that continued late into the evening, Martyr attacked the Fretilin leadership and their campaign to mobilize support around Australia, as well as organizations like the Campaign for an Independent East Timor (CIET), which had established links with the Australian Communist Party and the Trade Union movement around Australia. He dismissed Fretilin as a nationalist body and as a force in East Timor, both politically and military. The reality then for Martyr was that:

> The East Timor moratorium is simply not a spontaneous rising up of concerned Australians anxious to support a genuine independence movement in a small nation. It is a careful scheme organized by the Communist Party, Communist and left wing led unions and student organizations, left wing aid agencies[2] and a handful of hard core Fretilin activists in Australia. Is this picture not all too familiar? It is designed not only to support the Fretilin and a Communist takeover in East Timor, but also to embarrass this Government and weaken our ties with Indonesia.[3]

Martyr's view drew strong criticism, not only from the Opposition but also from within his own ranks. Young[4] considered it was 'representative of the extremist right-wing reactionary views that are being expressed under the cloak of the Liberal Party'. Chipp[5] judged that it was damaging for the House of Representatives, particularly on the government's side, to label Fretilin as an

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.98, p.922, 23 March 1976.

2 Martyr was particularly critical of the involvement of the churches in this moratorium, particularly as they were active through the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) and the Action for World Development Program (AWDP). The core of his criticism related to the use of donations from the churches -- essentially given for welfare and humanitarian purposes -- for political use; ostensibly 'to promote a communist led movement aimed at subjecting a whole people and a country to communism' (CPD, H.R., Vol.98, p.924, 23 March 1976).

3 Ibid., p.923.

4 M.J. Young, the Labor Member for Port Adelaide, SA. Ibid., pp.924-926.

5 Recently demoted -- and free to express such views -- from his position in the first Fraser Ministry (18 December 1975 - 12 January 1976) as Minister for Social Security, Minister for Health and Minister for Repatriation and Compensation. Ibid., pp.1054-1055, 25 March 1976.

entirely communist movement, and one to be destroyed. In a sensible speech that attempted to balance the strong views held and expressed by some of his colleagues, Chipp argued strongly for Fretilin's nationalist credentials, and was clearly concerned that dragging the Timor debate into an ideological abyss would ensure that 'we will lose all sense of objectivity and perhaps fall into the same trap that we fell into when the Vietnam war was going on'. In a plea to commonsense, Chipp concluded:

> I would like to think that in the future when we look at matters of self-interest we do not simply say that if East Timor becomes independent it may do a deal with the Russians... Let us not, as we did on some occasions during the Vietnam conflict when we shouted out slogans about domino theories and so on, be led by cliches espoused by members of either the extreme Left or the extreme Right... let us have the debate without acrimony.[1]

However, Chipp's words fell on deaf ears because, on the other side of the House of Representatives, Young was joined in his criticism by Fry. In his first speech to the Parliament on East Timor,[2] Fry found Martyr's views 'highly offensive and highly inaccurate', and attempted to redress Martyr's perceptions of the Timor moratorium and those involved in it -- particularly the churches and aid agencies. What was also of concern to Fry was Martyr's return to 'all the old bogies about the Fretilin forces being communist dominated', and his 'audacity to support a fascist aggression with no justification whatsoever, against the poor defenceless half-starved people' of East Timor.[3]

The Role of the UN

Meanwhile, Peacock was to spend this period fending off Opposition probes into the roles of the United Nations and Australia in events in East Timor, particularly as they related to pressuring Indonesia to withdraw militarily and to giving the East Timorese the opportunity to determine their own future.[4] In the

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1 Ibid., H.R., Vol.98, p.1055, 25 March 1976.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.98 pp.1082-1084, 25 March 1976.

3 Ibid., pp.1083-1084, 25 March 1976.

4 See for example Questions to Peacock from G.M. Bryant, the Labor Member for Wills (Victoria), Ibid., p.254, 25 February 1976; Ibid., p.534, 4 March 1976.

Senate, Senator R.G. Withers,[1] had taken over Wriedt's role in arguing the government's position, with an early adjournment debate on refugees from East Timor -- initiated by Senator J.A. Mulvihill[2] and in response to pressure from the Portuguese community in Sydney -- drawing in the Minister for Social Security (Senator M.G.C. Guilfoyle)[3]. This ushered in a period in the Senate when both sides of the Chamber demanded further information on the Indonesian invasion of East Timor;[4] on reports of the subsequent massacring of the East Timorese people;[5] and on the respective roles of the UN and Australia in putting pressure on the Indonesian Government to admit the International Red Cross and a UN mission of observers.[6]

Senator Withers, like Wriedt before him, provided unsatisfactory answers, and his poor performances incited Labor's Senator Primmer to launch a major assault on Indonesia's actions in East Timor, and the government's silence over the matter. While Fry was in the House of Representatives insisting that he was being 'covertly inhibited and harassed in seeking to obtain the free flow of information' on events taking place in East Timor,[7] his colleague in the Senate was scathing in his criticism of the complicity of the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs in condoning Indonesia's actions. The Victorian Senator was far from constrained, accusing Indonesia of 'mass genocide' and

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1 Liberal, WA, Minister Administrative Services, Leader of the Government in the Senate, and Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Senate.

2 ALP, NSW. CPD, Senate, S.67, 18 February 1976, pp.78-82.

3 Later, Dame Margaret.

4 See, for example, question from Senator Missen (Liberal, NSW) to Withers, CPD, Senate, S.67, 19 February 1976, p.92.

5 Question from Senator C.G. Primmer (Labor, Victoria). Ibid., p.9, 419 February 1976. Senator Withers responded in March, Ibid., pp.350-351, 2 March 1976. See Senator Primmer's continued prodding on the question of the massacring of the East Timorese, Ibid., p.1033, 6 April 1976.

6 See Chapter Seven, also question from Senator J.N. Button (Labor, Victoria), Ibid., pp.131-132, 24 February 1976.

7 See above.

questioning whether Indonesian officers involved in the invasion were trained in Australia and using Australian military equipment. In a scathing attack he accused the Indonesians of being 'neo-fascists... extreme right wing militarists', and argued that their expansionist activities demanded that the Australian Government review its policy towards them.[1] Moreover, quoting from a press release issued by the Campaign for Independent East Timor (CIET),Primmer accused the Australian Government of complying with the advice contained in Woolcott's cable, was critical of Portugal's policies, and accused a handful of right-wing figures within Australia[2] of complicity in the UDT Coup. Primmer concluded with strong criticism of the new government's swing back to 'the cold war theories of the 1950s and 1960s', conjurring up notions of 'a mythical enemy out there -- the red or the yellow peril...'.[3]

For the next five weeks, the Parliament was abuzz with revelations of Australian Government obstructionism regarding the UN representative's (Dr Guicciardi) visit to East Timor,[4] the supplying of arms, originating in Australia, to Fretilin,[5] and the government's efforts to halt attempts by relief ships to take humanitarian aid to East Timor[6]. The confiscation of a radio

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1 CPD, Senate, S. 67, 24 February 1976, p.149.

2 Michael Darby (MP), and former Brigadier Bernard J. Callinan -- a director of British Petroleum (Australia), a prominent member of the National Civic Council and the Australian Democratic Labor Party, and a former captain in the Australian Commandos in Timor during the Second World War. (CPD, Senate, S.67, 24 February 1976, pp.150-151).

3 Ibid., p.151.

4 Question to Senator Withers from Senator Primmer, Ibid., p.133, 24 February 1976.

5 Question from Senator Sir Magnus Cormack to Senator Withers, Ibid., 16 March 1976, p.466; question from Senator Button to Senator Withers, Ibid., 25 March 1976, p.779. See also questions from C.M. Connolly to Peacock, CPD, H.R., Vol.98, p.1467, 7 April 1976.

6 Question from Senator Sir Magnus Cormack to Senator Withers, CPD, Senate, S.67, 6 April, p.1034. Question from Fry to Peacock, CPD, H.R., Vol.99, p.1578, 27 April 1976. Both questions related to Trade Union attempts to ship this aid. See also Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue: II", p.249, on aid agency and church pressures on the

transmitter near Darwin,[1] considered to be unlicensed and receiving communications from Fretilin in East Timor, was also raised in the Parliament. Then in early April, an Adjournment Debate on Amnesty International spilled over into an examination of Indonesia's actions in East Timor, and the tabling of an all-party petition by Senator Gietzelt, the President of the Parliamentary group 'Friends of Timor'. The Senate was also informed that the petition had been cabled to the Secretary-General of the United Nations that day.[2] By the end of April, the Parliament had become embroiled in a bitter debate over allegations by an Australian planter, Rex Syddell -- evacuated from Timor earlier in March -- that Fretilin troops had killed the five Australian journalists. This gave rise to an intense Grievance Debate in the House of Representatives in late April, and to a Matter of Urgency Debate in the Senate in early May, 1975.

The Journalists

In addition to tabling the petition, Gietzelt took the opportunity to direct stern criticisms toward Rex Syddell and his allegations that Fretilin were responsible for the deaths of the five Australian-based newsmen. In a speech that lasted over forty minutes, Gietzelt left no doubt about his contempt for the man, his background and notoriety, and for his allegations.[3] He also extended this contempt to include the Department of Foreign Affairs, in particular Woolcott whom he considered was 'one of the guilty men... who have blood on their hands in this issue'.[4]

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government in this regard.

1 Questions from Senator Primmer to Senator Withers, CPD, Senate, S.67, 24 February 1976, p.133; Senator Button to Senator Withers, Ibid., 26 February 1976, p.255; question from Senator Primmer on the same matter to Senator Carrick (Minister representing the Minister for Post and Telecommunications E.L. Robinson), Ibid., 18 March 1976, p.619 (Carrick's response tabled six days later, Ibid., 24 March 1976, p.712).

2 CPD, Senate, S.67, 7 April 1976, pp.1167-1170.

3 CPD, Senate, S.67, 7 April 1976, pp.1168-1170.

4 Ibid., p.1171.

Gietzelt was joined by Senator Bonner[1] who considered, in less colourful terms, that the Whitlam and Fraser governments were equally to blame for events in East Timor, and that a group representing a cross-section of Australian society should be allowed to visit East Timor to disburse humanitarian aid (an idea put to him by Fretilin leaders during his visit, with Fry and Gietzelt, to East Timor in 1975). However, and perhaps due to the strain of what had been a long parliamentary session now drawing to a close, Bonner was impelled to conclude:

> I believe that we as Australians have failed the East Timorese people dismally. From here on I do not know what the answer is. I would be a fool to be so presumptuous as to try to say what I believe is the answer in East Timor. I say this, and I say it with great humility: we as Australians have failed those who were our allies during our greatest crisis. I believe that all of us, both the previous Government and those who were in the Opposition and who have since become the Government, should hang our heads in shame.[2]

In the meantime, Foreign Affairs Minister Peacock was proposing to visit Indonesia. Foreshadowed at the time of his talks with Malik in January, these subsequent discussions were a major step in his attempts to rebuild the relationship, and took place on 13-15 April.[3] Peacock not only increased Australia's aid over the next three years to $86 million (compared with $69 million in the triennium to June 1976), but attempted 'to reaffirm the importance the Australian Government attached to Australia's close relations with Indonesia'.[4] Peacock's return -- with Indonesia's agreement to give thought to the resumption of Australian aid to East Timor, and the possibility of allowing Australian officials to enter the

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1 Liberal Senator for Queensland. Ibid., pp.1173-1175.

2 CPD, Senate, S.67, 7 April 1976, pp.1173-1175. Senator Cotton (Liberal Member for NSW, and Minister for Industry and Commerce) closed the debate in the early hours of April with a summary of the evening's debate. However, he concluded, 'In all these things I want to see the total version of the facts to make my own judgement on the matter', reflecting a view held by many in the Australian Parliament.

3 AFAR, April 1976, p.219 and May 1976, p.254.

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 3 April 1976.

territory to enquire into the deaths of the journalists[1] -- was well received by the Australian press.

It seemed that the gap between the two countries was closing. However, it was aggravated once again by two events: news of Indonesia's intention to conduct an act of choice among the East Timorese along the lines of the West Irian 'Act of Free Choice' in 1969,[2] and allegations by a former KOTA leader, Jose Martins, that while he did not claim to have seen it happen, the Australian journalists had been killed by troops led by Indonesians.[3] While the former caused a storm in the community,[4] the circumstances surrounding the deaths of the journalists raised questions and debate in both Chambers of the Parliament upon its reopening on 27 April.

In the Senate, Martins' allegations provided Gietzelt with the opportunity to take up where he left off before the recess, demanding that Woolcott be recalled and a proper enquiry be conducted by either the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, or by the Senate itself.[5] Senator M.A. Colston[6] demanded information about the precise manner or circumstances in which the journalists died, while in the House of Representatives, T. Uren[7] hammered the Foreign Affairs Minister, calling for the government's position in view of the now

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1 AFAR, May 1976, p.254.

2 The Canberra Times, 24 April 1976.

3 The Age, 26 April 1976, The Sydney Morning Herald, 26 April 1976. For a detailed account of these allegations and attempts to bring him to Australia by the AJA (Victorian Branch), see Jolliffe, J., East Timor, pp.282-289.

4 Viviani observed that it 'provoked immediate protests in which a conference of trade unionists, teachers, students, church people, and aid agencies called for an end to all Australian aid to Indonesia...'. Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue: II", p.251.

5 CPD, Senate, S.68, 27 April, pp.1245-1246.

6 ALP Senator from Queensland. Ibid., p.1304.

7 CPD, H.R., Vol.99, p.1574, 27 April 1976.

conflicting stories concerning the deaths.[1] In both Chambers the government's response was predictably defensive, with Withers tabling documents that 'set out in the fullest possible manner what the government knows about the tragic events which took place at Balibo...'.[2] Withers explained, however, as Peacock did in the House of Representatives in response to continued probing from Uren, that due to the lack of any kind of material evidence, the government was hamstrung in conducting a full enquiry into Martins' allegations.[3]

In a further bid to deflect this criticism, Peacock spoke of the inevitable distress which the public debate over the deaths was undoubtedly causing relatives and friends of the dead journalists,[4] and that the Indonesians had complied with his request to allow an investigatory team (from the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, as it turned out) to visit East Timor.[5] This still did not satisfy Uren, who was now joined in his criticism in the House of Representatives by Whitlam and Bryant.[6]

In the first parliamentary defence of his government's Timor policies since losing office, and in response to Peacock's

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1 J.S. Dunn, who had claimed in early March that 60 000 Timorese (or 10 percent of the population) had been killed (the Canberra Times, 4 March 1976), subsequently alleged that the journalists had been killed by Indonesian troops, confirming Jose Martins' claims. (CPD, Senate, S.68, 27 April 1976, p.1304).

2 Ibid., pp.1304-1306. One document was a letter sent by Peacock to the AJA earlier that month. The second was a briefing paper put together by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

3 CPD, H.R. Vol.99, pp.1574-1576, 27 April 1976.

4 This point was put in very strong terms by D. Chipp early in May when he informed the House of Representatives that the 'cheap politicking' aroused by the issue was distressing the parents of the deceased journalists. Ibid., p.1841, 4 May 1976.

5 CPD, H.R., Vol.99, p.1575, 27 April 1976. In a response to a question later on whether or not the government would hold a judicial enquiry into the deaths, Peacock said he would put all the findings arising from the investigation 'before the House and the Public'. Ibid., p.1735, 29 April 1976.

6 Ibid., pp.1734-1738 and pp.1738-1739.

description of him as a person 'trapped by his own duplicity', Whitlam was keen to take the floor and to have it on record that, as Prime Minister, he had initiated enquiries into the deaths of the five Australians with the Indonesian President.[1] Peacock acknowledged this, but was quick to add it was the first and only action he had taken on the issue apart from giving 'either tacitly or avowedly ... support to a degree of Indonesian nationalism'. Peacock, now political point scoring, added that, rather than accept the matter as settled, the Fraser government -- as Whitlam had as Prime Minister, essentially in response to advice from his Ambassador (Woolcott) -- would not be prepared to accept Indonesian assurances, and reaffirmed the principal points of his policy. Peacock insisted:

> We have done [this] ... not only at the government-to-government level and through the media here but also through the United Nations on three occasions in the short period we have been in office. What a stark contrast to what you have done! ... Your [record] ... was one of amoral non-activity. Ours is one of probing on principle.[2]

The debate became extremely heated during nearly an hour of question time -- dominated in the main by clashes between Whitlam and Peacock over their respective governments' attitudes.

This Opposition pressure, however, sustained and intense as it was, did not faze the government. The first casualty was Whitlam who, later in the day, initiated a Grievance Debate in which he accused Peacock of taking 'a particularly miserable and in fact despicable line in the insinuations he had made', knowing 'perfectly well that the refutation of what he had been insinuating and alleging cannot be published for about 20 years'.[3] While Whitlam concluded that history would confirm Suharto's undertaking that Indonesia would not resort to arms over the Timor issue while he was Prime Minister, Peacock was not deterred, now gaining strength from Whitlam's reactions. Nor was the newly elected M.J. Neil.[4] Both continued to upgrade the criticism, not only of the

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1 Ibid., p.1736.

2 Ibid.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.99, p.1743, 27 April 1976.

4 The Liberal Member for St. George (NSW) having defeated W.

Whitlam government's policy but also of the former Prime Minister's notion that Suharto had kept his word to him.

While it was clear that both Peacock and Whitlam were throwing political mud at each other, the bitterness of the debate obscured the extent to which both protagonists were in basic agreement on the Timor issue. Both saw stable and continuous relations with Indonesia as a fundamental objective of foreign policy; both were of the belief that the absorption of East Timor into the Republic of Indonesia was inevitable and -- with qualification as to how it was done -- desirable; and both were encouraged in this view by the Department of Foreign Affairs. Thus, in view of this fundamental coincidence of views, both Whitlam and Peacock were clearly overtaken by the imperatives of domestic politics.

In this context Peacock was striking from a position of strength. Having been in Opposition in the period leading up to the invasion, he could not be saddled with Australian policy of that period. Now, nearly six months later, with the Indonesian action a fait accompli, he could shrewdly chide the Indonesians -- albeit with restraint -- while generally being seen to be a defender of principle in international affairs. Taking such a stand not only enabled Peacock to secure concessions from Indonesia, but also to secure a favourable response from the Australian press, which considered his policies had 'the merit of principle and firmness'.[1] Whitlam, on the other hand, was deeply vulnerable on East Timor, and was fast sinking into the quagmire of his own rhetoric as it related to international morality. The former Prime Minister was finding it difficult to defend, on grounds of realism, the kind of policy he had always found time to deplore, on grounds of principle.

In what could be described as reflecting an element of despair, Whitlam attempted to shift the focus away from himself -- simply engaging in the next stage of hitting back at the government -- when he alleged a former coalition government Minister for Civil Aviation (revealing later in Townsville it was the late Sir Shane

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Morrison for the seat. CPD, H.R., Vol.99, p.1751, 29 April 1976.

[1] The Age, 19 April 1976, the Australian, 17 April 1976 and the Sydney Morning Herald, 17 April 1976 quoted in Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.251.

Paltridge) had accepted a bribe in consideration for the ordering of Lockheed aircraft in the late 1950s.[1] However, Whitlam only succeeded in generating a uproar in the Parliament[2] and press,[3] and in isolating himself even further from his parliamentary colleagues.[4] In particular, it provided the government (especially Prime Minister Fraser) with the opportunity to continue flaying Whitlam; with the result:

> Apart from Mr Whitlam's ruddy complexion glowing a shade brighter, he sits there soaking up the punishment like an old prize-fighter who no longer feels the blows.[5]

Continuing calls for Self Determination

The following week, in what was a shift of tactics and focus, the Opposition again put the Timor issue before the two Chambers: in the House of Representatives, as a matter of Public Importance[6] on 4 May, and in the Senate, as a Matter of Urgency[7] the next day. Both debates were initiated by the Opposition, and embroiled twelve politicians from both sides of each Chamber.

In the House of Representatives, Uren moved an urgency motion calling on the Fraser government to use all leverage available to it to bring about a genuine act of self-determination in East Timor. While Uren did 'not want to turn this urgent and tragic situation into a party political wrangle', he was intent on focusing attention of the role of the Department of Foreign Affairs in events leading up to, and including, the invasion. Uren asserted:

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1 See the Canberra Times, 30 April 1976 and CPD, H.R., Vol.99, pp.1744-1745, 29 April 1976.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.99, 29 April 1976, p.1746 ff.

3 See the Sydney Morning Herald, 7 May 1976, the Age, 5 May 1976 and 6 May 1976, the Canberra Times, 6 May 1976.

4 MHRs Uren and Fry (Labor), Connolly (Liberal) and Thompson (NCP). Senators Gietzelt, Button, Wheeldon and Primmer (Labor), and Senators Sir Magnus Cormack, Scott, Knight and Chaney (Liberal).

5 Peter Bowers in the Sydney Morning Herald, 7 May 1976.

6 CPD, H.R., Vol.99, pp.1849-1857, 4 May 1976.

7 CPD, Senate, S.68, 5 May 1976, pp.1533-1552.

> It would seem that in some high corridors of power in the Foreign Affairs Department it has been decided for these two-thirds of a million people that they should be incorporated into the vast nation of Indonesia....[1]

As a former prisoner-of-war on the island, Uren considered that Australians owed the people of East Timor a moral debt for their assistance to Australian troops during the Second World War. Moreover, the former Labor Minister questioned the value and importance of a relationship with a country whose 'gross violations of human rights' compelled Australian foreign policy makers to:

> engage... in a shoddy regional political exercise at the expense of its principles. Australia is in the process of betraying a country and a people to whom it owes a considerable debt. And why? Because of some phony excuse of the worst type of expedient diplomacy.[2]

For Uren, one aspect of that diplomacy involved the Department of Foreign Affairs withholding information on activities in East Timor. Specifically:

> a silent group of Foreign Affairs officials ... skillfully sought to protect their own pet project of a certain kind of relationship with the Suharto government.[3]

Uren's Labor colleague, Ken Fry, was another who pulled few punches, directing criticism at the Fraser government, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Indonesians, whose role he considered had been based on 'blatant lies, deceit and misrepresentation from the beginning'. On another level, he focused on the UN, and the impotence of Japan and America, both of which he considered had the economic leverage to put some pressure on Indonesia, but chose instead to turn their backs on the issue.[4]

In response, government backbenchers Connolly and Thomson[5] predictably steered attention back to the Whitlam government's policies. While Thomson reiterated that it was the Whitlam government which had sown the seeds of what was happening in Timor by approving Indonesia's actions, Connolly considered the change of

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1 Ibid., H.R., Vol.99, p.1849, 4 May 1976.

2 Ibid., H.R., Vol.99, p.1850, 4 May 1976.

3 Ibid., p.1851.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.99, p.1855-1856.

5 NCP Member for Leichhardt, Queensland. Ibid., p.1857.

attitude of the Labor Party on East Timor was a great act of hypocrisy. In contrast, he argued that the Fraser government had moved decisively to set out Australia's attitude, and reaffirmed Peacock's four points on East Timor.[1]

The Sydney Morning Herald[2] -- one of the few Australian newspapers to comment[3] on these proceedings in Parliament -- was sympathetic to this view and considered the Opposition's tactics to be 'stone-throwing in glass houses'. While it considered that neither the Fraser nor Whitlam governments had emerged with much credit from their performances over the issue, it considered that Uren's adoption of 'a lofty moral tone' was, 'rather more than a hint of stone-throwing...'. The editorial agreed with the basic tenets of Uren's statements. However, it reminded its readers that it was the Whitlam government which had placed Australia in such a position of humiliation, and concluded:

> Australia's policy has been, even at the cost of losing self-respect, to avoid any possibility of a breach with Indonesia. Good relations are important - but not at any price.

Such comments could also have applied to a debate in the Senate the following day. In initiating the debate, Senator Gietzelt pursued the same arguments presented by Fry and Uren in the House of Representatives.[4] He was particularly critical of 'the

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1 Ibid., pp.1852-1855.

2 The Sydney Morning Herald, 6 May 1976.

3 Most newspapers accounted for the debate, although few, if any, provided any kind of commentary or analysis. The Australian press seemed to be preoccupied with the upcoming State (NSW) election -- which saw the rise of Wran and the demise of Willis -- and residual issues left over from the Whitlam era of government, including charges of fraud against Dr J. Cairns' former secretary Juni Morosi, and the 'Loans Affair'. Peter Hastings, of the Sydney Morning Herald, was involved with a series of articles on Australia's defence, subsequently published on 6-7 May 1976.

4 Senator Gietzelt moved:

'That in the opinion of the Senate the following is a matter of urgency:
The situation in East Timor and in particular:
(a) The military action of Indonesia and its consequent effects upon the Timorese people.
(b) The need for Indonesia to respond to the decisions of the United Nations.

pro-Indonesian officials within the Department of Foreign Affairs', the circumstances that led to the deaths of the journalists and the fact that information concerning these deaths was kept from the Australian Parliament and people. Senator Sir Magnus Cormack turned this argument around and centred attention on Whitlam's silence, both in Australia and Indonesia, following his discussions with Suharto in 1974 and 1975.[1] He was particularly critical of the Victorian Trade Union leader, Halfpenny, for initiating the collection of money to buy food and medical supplies, and the chartering of a boat to take them to the East Timorese people. For Cormack the proper way to get relief supplies to East Timor was through the International Red Cross.[2] Cormack spent a good deal of his time focusing on the revolution in Portugal, the way the Communist Party had taken over the armed forces and the subsequent shipping of arms to trouble-spots like Mozambique and East Timor. It was clear to him that the armed forces of East Timor had been infiltrated by the Communist Party.

While Labor's Senator Button conceded that the Whitlam government may have misinterpreted the situation in East Timor before the civil war commenced, he was convinced that no good would come of the Fraser government trying to make political mileage out of the Labor Party's treatment of the situation.[3] Upon this, Senator Knight called on all Opposition Senators who were dissatisfied with the government's initiatives, to detail what actions they would deem proper to be taken.[4] The debate then seemed to come the full circle with Labor Senator Primmer arguing

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(c) The denial of self-determination for the people of East Timor and the inadequacy of the steps taken to ensure the right to determine their own future.

(4) The failure of the Australian Government to make a concerted effort to provide adequate communication with the people of East Timor and to provide appropriate humanitarian aid' (CPD, Senate, S.68, 5 May 1986, p.1533).

1 CPD, Senate, S.68, 5 May 1976, pp.1538-1540.

2 At the time the ICRC was banned by Indonesia from entering the stricken areas of Timor.

3 CPD, Senate, S.68, 5 May 1976, pp.1540-1543.

4 Ibid, p.1547.

that Labor Senators could only make such decisions on information supplied by the Department of Foreign Affairs, and, to this point, they had failed to do so because they claimed they did not know.[1]

While the motion was subsequently lost, the issue was kept buoyant by these debates. Moreover, it was clear that all the government had to do to counter Opposition criticism and to deflect attack was to highlight the vulnerability of the Labor government's role. This gave rise to a:

> growing polarization of Australian opinion on the Timor issue. On the one hand there was in the press increasing support for Mr Peacock's strategy of mending the bilateral relationship and for toning down criticism of Indonesia. On the other, Timor activists extended their attacks on the Indonesian Government to include the nature of that government's rule....[2]

These debates also reflected the deep division within the Parliament, perhaps less marked in the Senate than in the House of Representatives. Labor's Senator Button spoke strongly and eloquently on this and other important points. In a view he shared with Gietzelt, he considered that the Australian Parliament had remained silent, which was out of character in view of the assistance it had provided in other humanitarian issues, and where it concerned the well-being of people from other nations. Button put this silence down to the widely-held hope that the issue would simply disappear, and the tendency to see the issue as one used by the Left and the Right for political point scoring. This was underpinned by what he regarded was a realpolitik view of international relations:

> Grand design strategies are played by the dice men of international relations and the argument goes something like this: It is desirable in an area such as Southeast Asia that there not be small nation states [and]... from the point of view of Australia that we should be able to deal with our immediate neighbour, Indonesia, without the embarrassment of an independent state anywhere in between; it is desirable from the point of view of the whole region, having regard to a genuine desire, which I think is shared by all parties, for stability in the area, that there should not be any area in which any form of instability is allowed to arise.

However, the difficulty of this view, for Button, and one which lay at the bottom of much of the criticism of both the Whitlam and

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1 Ibid., pp.1550-1551.

2 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", pp.251-252.

Fraser governments' policies, was that it clashed with:

> the reality of the anticipations and the feeling and concern in the world-wide community for the principle of self-determination ... which qualifies any other judgements which we might seek to make.[1]

The Abating Storm

There was no escaping the fact that the debate in both Chambers embraced only the few who had stolidly maintained their momentum throughout the previous two years. Furthermore, due to a rising interest in domestic political issues under the new Fraser government, the press gave the debate decreasing coverage, and it was to prove in the following two years to be an important factor in an erosion of the wider parameters of support. Fundamental to this was the return to the view, held by a majority of those who maintained an interest in East Timor, particularly among the more moderate and conservative of Australians, that stressed the importance of a stable relationship with Indonesia.

Nevertheless, the campaign in the Parliament continued. On 6 May 1976, Uren continued his attack on the government, insisting during Question Time,[2] and an Adjournment Debate[3] late in the day, that Jose Martins' interpretation of the deaths of the five journalists be judged not only by the Department of Foreign Affairs -- who Uren considered had, at the higher echelons, 'conspired to mislead the Australian Government and the Australian people on this issue' -- but also by the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence. For Uren, Martins' claim not only cast doubt on the Department's explanation of events but 'raised grave suspicions about [its] involvement in the tragic aftermath of the Balibo invasion'. In essence, he did not want Caesar judging Caesar.[4]

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1 CPD, Senate, S.68, 5 May 1976, pp.1541-1542. These themes were central to speeches made by Senators Harradine (Independent, Tasmania) and Mulvihill two weeks later in an Adjournment Debate. However, they drew little response. Ibid., 18 May 1976, pp.1674-1679.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.99, p.1995, 6 May 1976.

3 Ibid., pp.2075-2076, 6 May 1976.

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.99, p.2076, 6 May 1976. Uren was bitterly challenged by Senator Knight, himself a former diplomat,

Meanwhile, with Indonesian activities in East Timor giving rise to a greater degree of Indonesian control and, later, on 31 May 1976, an 'Act of Free Choice',[1] Australian trade unions and the Catholic Bishops were unsuccessfully attempting to send aid to East Timor. Although the latter stirred comment in both Chambers, it was the 'act' which created the greatest anger. In a question to Senator Withers on the following day, Senator Gietzelt described the 'act' as a 'sham', and contradicting UN decisions regarding East Timor's right to self-determination. The NSW Senator questioned, in particular, Australia's absence from the 'charade', and wondered whether it reflected the government's recognition of 'the immorality and illegality of the whole ceremony and the proposed integration decision'[2] -- themes he pursued vigorously two days later in a thirty minute speech to the Senate.[3]

This speech reflected a sense of urgency, which was overshadowed at times by the rancor of a man who was facing defeat. Gietzelt called on the government to do everything in its power, including suspending aid to Indonesia, to prevent East Timor from being incorporated formally into Indonesia. Gietzelt considered the act of integration to be a farce and a pantomime, and directed criticism towards three areas: the culpability of both Labor and Liberal governments -- in particular the failure of the Whitlam government to debate the issue in Cabinet; comments made by the Queensland Premier, Bjelke-Peterson; and the role of Richard

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early in June, who asked whether it was more a case 'that the deceit referred to [by Uren] was the result of decisions made by the Labor Government last year'. (Ibid., Senate, S.68, 2 June 1976, p.2195). Knight's attack brought on a strong challenge from Senator Georges (Labor, Queensland) who criticized the role of the caretaker government under Fraser. (Ibid., 2 June 1976, p.2197).

1 On 31 May, the Popular Assembly of East Timor, which consisted of local leaders and chiefs, met and unanimously approved the incorporation of East Timor into the Republic of Indonesia. Reminiscent of the West New Guinea 'Act of Free Choice', the ceremony was short (a matter of hours) and attended by diplomats (witnesses from seven countries, excluding Australia) and foreign journalists. On 18 July, Suharto signed the document which formally integrated Timor into the Indonesian Republic.

2 CPD, Senate, S.68, 1 June 1976, pp.2105-2106.

3 Ibid., 3 June 1976, pp.2330-2335.

Woolcott. Gietzelt was particularly critical of the Queensland Premier, whom he described as a 'public soft-core warmonger', and a man who:

> condones murder and atrocities taking place in that part of the world... He confirmed that he had been in touch with President Suharto several times before East Timor was invaded by Indonesian troops. This pompous, arrogant, hypocritical person, who represents the conservative forces in this country, takes out of the hands of the Australian government its right to make a determination about a foreign affairs issue.[1]

While Gietzelt found a strong ally in the Age,[2] the remainder of the Australian press was quiet, reflecting an increasing movement on its part towards a toning down of criticism, not only of the Fraser and former Whitlam governments, but also of Indonesia. In the House of Representatives, the reaction was strong, but short-lived, as Parliament went into recess within days. Bryant questioned Peacock derisively on the legality of the 'act' of integration,[3] while K. Johnson[4] found it 'farcical' and Dr. Cairns called on the government to vigorously protest 'the obvious and planned failure of the government of Indonesia to be associated with any act of self-determination'.[5]

Despite this limited though vocal criticism, the government continued to ride out the abating storm. This left Peacock only to again remind the Parliament[6] of his vocal criticism of Indonesia's course and the government's voting record on East Timor in the UN. Although deemed commendable by many in the press,[7] this was not accompanied by more concrete expressions of disapproval. In

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1 Ibid., 3 June 1976, p.2332. See Bjelke-Peterson's remarks in the Age, 4 June 1976.

2 See the Age stories of 4 June 1976 and 5 June 1976 and editorials of 3 June 1976 and 4 June 1976.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.99, p.2701, 1 June 1976.

4 Labor Member for Burke (Victoria), Ibid., p.2702, 1 June 1976.

5 CPD, H.R., Vol.99, pp.2701-2702, 1 June 1976.

6 Ibid, pp. 2701-3, 1 June 1976.

7 The Nation Review, 7-13 May 1976; the Canberra Times, 24 May 1976 and 31 May 1976; the Australian, 1 June 1976.

domestic terms, the Fraser government was happy to be perceived to have asserted its independence, making a small, but welcome, demonstration in favour of the principle of self-determination. Beneath the surface of Peacock's responses to these criticisms in the House of Representatives, however, lay a hope that the strain in relations with Indonesia could soon be eased, perhaps through a UN decision to accept East Timor's integration as a fait accompli, thus permitting Australia, in time, to accept such an outcome. However, in external terms, the broader strategy had its costs, as it was now antagonizing the powerbrokers within the Indonesian Government.

The Prime Minister was prepared to explain this situation to the Parliament thus:

> Australia has a deep interest in maintaining sound and close relations with Indonesia. The broad relationship is of great importance to both countries. Relations are such that both countries can state their views plainly. Both countries have broad interests in the stability of and the avoidance of great power conflict in Southeast Asia. It is against this background that we have stated our views on Timor. We support a genuine act of self-determination in Timor. The very fact that we have stated our views on Timor plainly is a mark of the underlying strength of the relationship.

Adding, perhaps more for Indonesian consumption but reflecting Fraser's understanding of the domestic constraints on his government's Indonesia policy:

> The question which faces Australia in common with other democracies is whether we are going to meet the challenge of cooperation and mutual restraint required from all the diverse groups in our society... A foreign policy that ignores the realities of the international situation is irresponsible. A foreign policy that ignores the intelligence and goodwill of the people, that does not trust its people sufficiently to explain and seek support for its actions, cannot succeed.[1]

This dictum was to be put to the test throughout the next two years. During this time, in January 1978, the Fraser government recognized East Timor as Indonesian territory.[2]

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[1] CPD, H.R., Vol.99, p.2739, 1 June 1976. See also Roy Milne Lecture, 27 September 1976 in AFAR, Vol.47, No.9, pp.471-480.

[2] Backgrounder, Department of Foreign Affairs, 27 January 1978, p.2.

Australian Movement Towards Accommodation

In the meantime, the Australian Government was reticent about explaining and finding support for its actions, indicating a movement towards accommodation with Indonesia. This movement could be traced in 1976 through two artful, though major decisions in September and October: to channel Australian Government aid through the Indonesian Red Cross and the seizure of a Fretilin-linked radio transmitter in Darwin. Both came to light under constant prodding in the Parliament by an increasingly vexed Opposition and against a background of increasing hostilities in East Timor.

On 26 August, Opposition backbencher, A.W. Jarman[1] questioned whether the government was prepared to assist in alleviating the dislocation and suffering of the people of East Timor. In his response Peacock could only indicate that while the government was prepared to offer $250 000 in aid, it had no way of channelling this aid through to the East Timorese. It was not until September, under questioning from Uren, that the government confirmed that it would, and through the Indonesian Red Cross. It was to serve two purposes:

> to try to ensure the protection of the rights and interests of those people and to preserve to the maximum the harmonious relations with Indonesia that we have traditionally and customarily enjoyed.[2]

This was a major shift from a policy which earlier had stated that only the ICRC could channel Australia's aid to the East Timorese people and was quickly seized upon by A. Whitlam.[3] Given the standing of the ICRC in relation to the Indonesian Government, he

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1 ALP Member for Deakin (Victoria). CPD, H.R., Vol.100, pp.600-601, 26 August 1976.

2 Sinclair, in response to Uren, in the absence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ibid., p.708, 7 September 1976. On 6 September, Hamish McDonald had written that the Fraser government was preparing to abandon its four-point policy, and that tacit recognition of East Timor's integration with Indonesia would be given before or during Fraser's impending trip to Jakarta in October. (the Sydney Morning Herald, 6 September 1976). See also Bruce Juddery's report of 6 September 1976 in the Canberra Times.

3 ALP Member for Grayndler (NSW), and son of the former Labor Prime Minister. CPD, H.R., Vol.100, p.792, 8 September 1976.

questioned whether the decision represented either de facto recognition of or a major step towards formal recognition of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor. The Foreign Affairs Minister was equally expeditious, and keen to dispel such an interpretation with the view that:

> I am not here to delineate the relationship between the Indonesian Red Cross and the Indonesian government, but it requires far more than that for a de jure recognition, and that is not to be canvassed. The premise of the government is that there is a humanitarian problem....[1]

This position was reaffirmed by the Prime Minister under questioning from Bryant later in September,[2] and gave rise to a strong rebuke from Uren, ably and subsequently supported, again, by an embittered Bryant.[3] Questioning the effectiveness of the Indonesian Red Cross, Uren saw such a decision as one made by an:

> appeasing Australian Government meekly accept[ing] that we cannot insist upon the International Red Cross relief operation. We have to direct our relief efforts through the Indonesian Red Cross. We have to ignore the fact that the Indonesian Red Cross has had a blatantly partisan role in East Timor. The mass of East Timorese who need aid will not get any real aid from the Indonesian Red Cross, and the Fraser government will not protest. It ignores our moral obligations to the East Timorese people.[4]

For Uren and Bryant, this decision was yet another example of a government under pressure from bureaucrats. In this instance, it was the Department of Foreign Affairs, which was 'trying to manoeuvre the government into abandonment of Australian principles ... for the sake of so-called good relations with Indonesia'.[5]

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.100, p.793, 8 September 1976. The Australian Defence Minister, K.J. Killen, also came under fire from B.W. Graham (Liberal, NSW) who criticized the Fraser government's arrangement for the delivery of military aid in the form of patrol boats. Killen took, clearly, great delight in deftly informing the House of Representatives that this aid, 'with the offensive capacity of a Manly ferry in dry dock', had been authorized to be given to the Indonesians by the Whitlam government. Ibid., pp.113-114, 16 September 1976.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.100, p.1365, 23 September 1976.

3 Ibid, pp.1406-1408.

4 Ibid., p.1406.

5 Ibid.

This questioning of government policy by the Opposition was marked by some bitter exchanges, particularly between Fraser and Whitlam.[1] It culminated in Whitlam declaring, in only his second major statement on East Timor in Opposition:

> It is time to deflate the pretensions and expose the nauseating hypocrisy of the Fraser government on the question of East Timor [Fraser's]... aspersions against me and my government were utterly without foundation ... it is the Fraser government which has spoken with two voices on this issue. It is the Foreign Minister who has engaged in double talk and double dealing.[2]

Peacock's behaviour, in particular, angered Whitlam who considered that Peacock 'parades like a show pony and struts like a peacock at question time but has nothing to say in debates'. Indeed, of the five discussions in the House of Representatives on important matters of foreign policy during 1976, Peacock had spoken only on one of them. Fraser also was not prepared to answer questions on East Timor. As the Prime Minister indicated to the House of Representatives on 7 September, in view of the fact that he was due to visit Indonesia in October, and that Peacock had been to Indonesia several times throughout the course of the year, 'no statement about major matters concerning Australia and Indonesia will be released between now and that time'.[3]

Whitlam's vulnerability was also evident outside the Parliament. In Caucus during the same week, Senator Gietzelt and Uren spearheaded a left-wing effort to ensure that the ALP took a tough stand over the Timor issue. In a motion to the national executive, the two requested that the Portuguese Government be approached to withhold recognition of the recently held 'act'.

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1 See for example, CPD, H.R., Vol.100, pp.1365-1366, 23 September 1976. It was also revealed by Paul Kelly in the Nation Review (27 September 1976) that Fraser had gained access to a cable sent by Indonesian Foreign Minister Malik to a counterpart 'of another country', stating he had told Whitlam of the possibility that force would be used to settle the Timor problem. Whitlam allegedly replied that this should be done 'as quickly as possible'. Kelly suggested that this 'ammunition' would be used by Fraser and Peacock to implicate Whitlam on the Timor question.

2 This drew a detailed and mocking criticism from M. Neil (CPD, H.R., Vol.100, pp.1420-1421, 23 September 1976).

3 In response to a question from Hamer, Liberal Member for Isaacs (Ibid., p.708, 7 September 1976).

With the motion supported by Wriedt, Bowen and Beazley, it was passed unanimously, without any debate on the matter by Whitlam.[1]

It was emerging that Whitlam, once the chief architect of Labor's foreign policy and the principal reason why the Timor issue was never raised in the Whitlam Cabinet, was no longer shaping the Opposition's attitude on Timor. Two ironies emerged from these developments. First, that Whitlam found it within himself to level severe criticism at the Fraser government for remaining silent on the issue, while frustrating attempts by the Labor Opposition in the Parliament to exact information and policy direction from the Fraser government. Second, that Whitlam was now in a situation in which the more the ALP left-wing and Caucus pressed the Timor question, the more difficult the Opposition leader's public position became.

Gietzelt and Wriedt (Opposition Leader in the Senate) although active in the party room, were relatively quiet in the Senate chamber throughout this period. Due to a preoccupation with domestic issues, the matter was not subjected to debate until mid-November, at which time Gietzelt continued his assault on Australian government policy and the Suharto government.[2] In the meantime, Senator Withers was successful in deflecting Opposition grilling on the issue, including, in early October, questions related to the seizure of the radio transmitter in Darwin.[3] While this particular incident ruffled few feathers in the Senate or the

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1 The Nation Review, 27 September 1976. Subsequent National Conferences in Perth (1977) and Adelaide (1979) were to 'condemn ... the Indonesian invasion of East Timor', called for a withdrawal of Indonesian forces, recognized DRET, and indicated that a future Labor government would suspend military aid to Indonesia, while recognizing the government of East Timor (if it was the choice of the East Timor people after a genuine act of self-determination). See Australian Labor Party, Platform, Constitution and Rules, 32nd National Conference (1977), and 33rd National Conference (1979), p.125 and pp.75-76 respectively.

2 CPD Senate, S.70, pp.2092-2097, 17 November 1976.

3 The Age, 2 October 1976 and the Australian, 2 October 1976. Questions were raised by Senators Missen and Button (CPD, Senate, S.69, 5 October 1976, p.969 and pp.1015-1016). Button's question drew a predictable though lengthy response from Senator Carrick who indicated that the seizure took place because 'there were reasonable grounds to suspect a breach of the Wireless Telegraphy Act'.

press (see Chapter Eight), it was a different story in the House of Representatives where the Opposition, unsuccessful in pressing the government for an explanation and more information,[1] initiated a Grievance Debate on 7 October.[2]

While these two major decisions (Red Cross and transmitter) were fundamental to the raising of this debate, it was the subtle but crystallizing changes in Fraser's policy towards the East Timor question and his trip to Indonesia on 7-11 October, ostensibly to address the Indonesian Parliament, that provided the catalyst for a graver and more acrimonious debate on 12 October 1976.

In responding to Opposition questioning over the Red Cross and transmitter issues before he left for Jakarta, Fraser found it necessary, in most instances, to simply say that government policy had been stated and that there was no need to repeat it.[3] What Fraser was not saying, however, was whether this policy was still in force. Another subtle change became more evident with government explanations regarding the seizure of the radio transmitter. In this instance, it lay in the Acting Foreign Affairs Minister's (Sinclair) response to Short,[4] in which Sinclair deliberately referred to the Fretilin forces still fighting in East Timor as 'insurgents' -- by definition, those who attempt to overthrow a legitimate government. As the only government in East Timor was the one set up by the Indonesians, the subtle change in Australia's policy was complete, and it came on the eve of Fraser's

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1 Questions from Messrs Beazley (CPD, H.R., Vol.101, p.1455, 5 October 1976), Short (Ibid., pp.1460-1461, 5 October 1976), James (Ibid., p.1541, 6 October 1976), and Birney (Ibid., p.1627, 7 October 1976). Broader questions were directed at the government by Dr J. Cairns (Ibid., p.1456, 5 October 1976), and Uren (Ibid., p.1535, 6 October 1976 and p.1620, 7 October 1976).

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.101, pp.1629-1640, 7 October 1976. This was initiated by Uren who argued Fraser's trip amounted to 'a tragic example of appeasement ... ignor[ing] the feelings of the East Timorese, a large number of democratically-minded Australians and the vast body of world opinion'. He was supported, in detailed speeches, by Messrs James and Bryant. (Ibid., pp.1632-1640, 7 October 1976).

3 See, for example, his response to a question from Uren. Ibid., p.1535, 6 October 1976 (See above).

4 CPD, H.R., Vol.101, pp.1460-1461, 5 October 1976 (see above).

departure for Jakarta.[1]

By this time it was increasingly evident that the Australian press were anxious to see the lines of communication between the two countries mended. Typical of this view was the Age which considered the best course open to the Australian Prime Minister, 'would appear to lie in going some way towards de facto recognition'.[2] For the Mercury, he had no choice:

> The present Australian policy ... is sound, sensible, and diplomatically logical. But it is effective only as a debating point. No matter how 'correct' the policy, it was declared after the world had been presented with a fait accompli. No diplomatic declaration by Australia or the UN will change the fact that Indonesia has taken East Timor by force.[3]

Thus, it was against such a background that Fraser made his first official visit to Indonesia. The discussions between the two leaders progressed smoothly,[4] and it emerged from their joint communique that they agreed to disagree on the East Timor issue.[5] However, no sooner had Fraser and Peacock left Indonesian soil than a spokesperson for President Suharto, the Indonesian State Secretary General Sudharmono, said that the Indonesian Government considered Australia's four-point Timor policy was a thing of the past and that Fraser's speech to the Indonesian Parliament implied that Australia had recognized Indonesia's integration of East

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1 It could be suggested one other signal lay in the fact that Peacock, already careful not to say anything about the issue, did not make one reference to it during his major policy speech to the United Nations General Assembly the previous week. Peacock was due to fly directly to Jakarta to meet, along with his Prime Minister, President Suharto. See Statement at 31st Session of UNGA, 29 September 1976. AFAR, Vol.47, No.9, September, pp.480-485.

2 The Age, 7 October 1976.

3 The Mercury, 7 October 1976.

4 See accounts by Warren Beeby, the Australian, 9 October 1976; Michelle Gratton and Michael Richardson, the Age, 9 October 1976, 10 October 1976 and 11 October 1976.

5 The Communique is reprinted in AFAR, Vol.47, No.10, pp.537-540. See also Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue: II", pp.254-255.

Timor.[1]

This gave rise to a strong parliamentary debate on 12 October 1976, watched closely and unsympathetically by the Indonesian leadership.[2] In the early afternoon the leader of the Opposition, Whitlam, put a motion to the effect that:

> this House of Representatives expresses its want of confidence in the Fraser government because it cannot pursue and express a coherent and principled foreign policy.[3]

Within days the Age's Claude Forell was compelled to correctly comment:

> The spectacle of the Australian government and Opposition squabbling over Timor is rather like two brothers quarrelling over the grave of a distant relative. They cannot restore him to life and they dare not avenge his death, even if they so wished, which in reality they do not. Neither is willing to admit his own impotence to prevent the killing or to atone for his failure to mitigate its violent and tragic circumstances. Each is moved not so much by grief or anger or remorse as by the urge to blame the other and justify himself, and to appear more righteous or realistic than the other. We have been watching a sickening display of futility and hypocrisy, a shedding of crocodile tears over spilt blood....[4]

Criticisms of the foreign policies pursued by the other paved the way for allegations and counter-allegations between the two parties about secret understandings on Timor between Whitlam, Fraser and the Indonesian Government. Whitlam described the Prime Minister's visit to Indonesia as a 'vaudeville' performance, and argued that the Prime Minister clearly had gone to Indonesia to recognize the integration of East Timor into Indonesia.[5] He then called on his parliamentary adversary to clarify Australia's policy on East Timor 'with utmost urgency'. For his part, Fraser simply said there had

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1 The Age, 12 October 1976. The Canberra Times, 12 October 1976.

2 See the Age, 16 October 1976, the Australian Financial Review, 18 October 1976 and the Australian, 12 October 1976 by, respectively, Richardson, McDonald and Beeby on Indonesia's reactions.

3 CPD, H.R., Vol.101, p.1718, 12 October 1976.

4 The Age, 14 October 1976.

5 CPD, H.R., Vol.101, pp.1718-1719, 12 October 1976.

been no major change in Australian policy.

While Fraser had stressed in Jakarta -- in his speech to the Indonesian Parliament and in the communique -- that it was the future which was important, he did not specifically refer to the future in his response to Whitlam, preferring instead to concentrate on the past and Whitlam's involvement in it. Fraser gave as much as he received; he pulled no punches, drawing on a wide variety of accounts that had emerged through debate over the preceding year, including the leaked Malik cable, to condemn Whitlam for his role in the Timor issue.[1]

While the government used its numbers in the House of Representatives to gag the debate after two hours, subsequently defeating the censure motion by 83 votes to 32 votes, the debate drew in Uren and Sinclair,[2] and was described by Douglas Wilkie, a seasoned political analyst, as a good example of:

> Australia mortifying itself with charges and counter-charges of hypocrisy as MPs undress each other in public and hang out their dirty linen ... They rupture themselves trying to straddle the cynicism of power politics and the need for vote-catching on a note of moral righteousness.[3]

The following day the Opposition continued to question the government, with as little success as their colleagues in the Senate.[4] Deputy Leader Uren, together with two backbenchers, called on Killen, Fraser and Sinclair to establish whether Indonesia had reinforced its military in East Timor during October.[5] Maintaining

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1 Ibid., pp.1723-1727.

2 Ibid., pp.1727-1734, 12 October 1976.

3 The Sun, 13 October 1976.

4 On the day of the debate in the House of Representatives, Senators Wriedt, Georges, Wheeldon, Bonner and McClelland fired questions at the government which were deftly sidestepped by Senator Withers (CPD, Senate, S.69, 12 October 1976, p.901). Before the week was out, Senators Georges and Cavanagh now joined by Senator O'Bryne, attempted to maintain the momentum, however with little success. (Ibid., 13 October, pp.1151-1153 and Ibid., 14 October, p.1188 and pp.1194-1196).

5 Questions from Nicholls (ALP Member for Bonython, SA), to Killen (CPD, H.R., Vol.101, p.1804, 13 October 1976), James to Fraser (Ibid., p.1808, 13 October 1976) and Uren to Sinclair (Ibid., p.1806, 13 october 1976).

the government's obstinacy, no one answered the question. Killen, Australia's Defence Minister, merely said rather pompously that the question was 'exquisitely worded for the Minister for Foreign Affairs'; while Sinclair, making no reference to the question, said that the government was worried about the people of East Timor, and for that reason Australia was sending aid through the Indonesian Red Cross. In what was described as a major blunder, however, Sinclair added:

> In no way is it our concern for the actions taken by Indonesia, other than in the way we can help the well-being of the people of East Timor.[1]

Recognizing that his remark would be particularly embarrassing at a time when the government was maintaining that it had not changed its policy on Timor -- which included withdrawal of Indonesian forces and a genuine act of self-determination -- Sinclair corrected his answer, indicating that he had not intended to suggest Australia was not concerned, rather he meant that 'It is not within Australia's capacity to determine' actions taken by Indonesia.[2] When the question was put to the Prime Minister he also chose to ignore it and spoke on the same matter as his National Country Party colleague, adding later that he believed:

> The Opposition is doing everything it possibly can to prevent the government carrying out its policy to see that the aid gets through to those who need it. It has opposed the policy of providing aid through the Indonesian Red Cross ... the suggestion of talks with Indonesian officials concerning refugees and family reunion. This is part of the policy of the Opposition to prevent aid being given to those who need it.[3]

In what were his final words on the issue during these heady days following his return from Jakarta, Fraser reaffirmed that Australia would not be giving <u>de facto</u> recognition to the Indonesian takeover of East Timor:

> at this stage ... because we want Indonesia to understand and to know the views we had of certain actions are views that continue ... if the government continued to restate the policy on Timor at this stage it put at risk the aim

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1 <u>CPD</u>, H.R., Vol.101, p.1806, 13 October 1976.

2 Ibid., p.1807, 13 October 1976.

3 Ibid., p.1810, 13 October 1976.

of good relations with Indonesia.[1]

If there were any doubts as to the Australian Government's motives throughout this period, then the Australian Financial Review[2] tried to relieve them with revelations in mid-October that the Indonesian Justice Minister, Professor Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, was attempting to induce the Australian Government to accord de jure recognition of Indonesia's integration of East Timor before the middle of the following year. Such inducement included a favourable settlement of the disputed Australia-East Timor offshore border and, confirmed by Lieutenant-General Ali Murtopo,[3] the renewal of petroleum and mineral exploration leases to Australian companies in Timor, including BHP, Timor Oil Ltd., and Woodside-Burmah.[4]

It was also revealed at this time that the Australian-Indonesian Business Cooperation Committee was pressing the government to recognize Indonesia's takeover of East Timor. The AIBCC's President, Kelman, had made representations to the government and warned it that its continued opposition to Indonesia's incorporation would further damage Australia's relations with the Suharto government. Moreover, and of direct interest to the AIBCC, he considered further tension over East Timor could do long-term damage to Australia's business and trade interests.[5]

Circulated by the Indonesian Foreign Minister in Jakarta, Kelman's remarks came within days of Peacock re-entering the debate for the first time since early September. In response to a question from Uren, the Foreign Minister had all but conceded Australia's recognition of the Indonesian takeover. While he

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1 The Age, 15 October 1976. Quoted in Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue: II", p.255.

2 Michael Richardson, Australian Financial Review, 19 October 1976.

3 Deputy Chief of the State Intelligence Coordinating Body (Bakin) , and a key adviser to President Suharto.

4 These revelations gave rise to sardonic questioning by Garrick of the Prime Minister in the Parliament (CPD, H.R., Vol.101, p.2085, 21 October 1976).

5 The Age, 23 October 1976.

reaffirmed that the government had not given de facto recognition he considered that Australia had to accept certain realities; that there was a:

> need for a careful balancing of our interests and responsibility. Our country's foreign policy, if it is to be viable, must take into account the regional environment in which it is to function and although preserving our position on principle, it has not and does not serve Australia's interests to place itself on a massive collision course with its largest regional neighbour... [Thus], we must take into account Indonesia's view that East Timor is now part of Indonesia and that this situation is not likely to change. This is Indonesia's view.[1]

While Peacock's statement received a mixed reaction in the Australian press,[2] it was a precursor to further movement on the part of the government towards accommodation during November. This was signalled at three levels: a Cabinet decision to stop the Australian Telecommunications Commission's (Telecom) Northern Territory outback radio receiving messages from or forwarding messages to East Timor; a decision to abstain on the United Nations' East Timor resolution, adopted by the Fourth Committee, and calling for the withdrawal of Indonesian forces from the territory; and finally, a decision to deny entry visas to several Fretilin 'Ministers'. These decisions were strongly denounced in Australia, particularly the Cabinet's decision on Telecom, which gave rise to a number of questions and some heated speeches in an Adjournment Debate in each of the Parliamentary Chambers.[3]

The Australian Government found little difficulty in providing legal or quasi-legal grounds to justify these decisions. In

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.101, p.2016, 20 October 1976.

2 For example, the Advertiser (22 October 1976) indicated 'it was a welcome and refreshing experience to have a statement [of] ... Australia's position in such clear terms ...', and the Courier Mail (22 October 1976) suggested it represented 'a not-very-successful attempt to clear away the shilly-shally and stalling of Australian policy on this issue'.

3 In the Senate, questions were raised by Senators Georges and Gietzelt (CPD, Senate, S.70, 17 November 1976, p.2024 and p.2031). In the House of Representatives, a question was put forward by Uren (Ibid., H.R., Vol.102, p.2757, 17 November 1976).

response to questioning from Uren,[1] Foreign Affairs Minister Peacock indicated, on the first matter, Telecom Australia had discovered that it had no right to handle overseas messages. Further, Telecom had been receiving and passing on messages received from the Darwin outpost radio. These messages, according to Peacock, emanated from a Fretilin transmitter in East Timor.[2]

These reasons did not bear close scrutiny in the press, nor did Peacock's explanation to the National Press Club on the second matter in Canberra on 18 November, the day after the vote was taken in the UN. Peacock was seemingly on firm ground when he argued that the resolution that was adopted differed in important particulars from the measures which Australia supported in the months immediately following the invasion of East Timor: it did not call on all parties to cease fighting, only on Indonesia; it did not contemplate a peaceful solution to the conflict; and it spoke not of 'self-determination' (with its implied possibility of 'integration') but only of independence. Thus:

> We are aware of the view that the resolution failed to make a balanced appeal for the avoidance of further bloodshed, we had reservations about the language and elements of judgement involved in the resolution. We thought some of the steps that we proposed were unnecessary.[3]

Notwithstanding Peacock's exposition -- which did not offer an explanation of why the Fraser government failed to condemn Indonesia's failure to abide by those early calls, particularly in view of Australia's stated policy which the Fraser government, while refusing to state it afresh, insisted had remained operative -- Australia's behaviour in the UN indicated that Fraser and Peacock were pursuing a dual policy. On one hand, they were publicly sustaining the view that the government's attitude had not

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1 Senator Carrick responded simultaneously and in kind, in response to a similar question from Senator Gietzelt in the Senate (Ibid., Senate, S.70, 17 November 1976, p.2031).

2 Senator Carrick preferred to indicate to the Senate that it was 'not possible to say at this stage that the transmissions are associated with Fretilin or any other group' (CPD, Senate, S.70, 17 November 1976, p.2031).

3 The Canberra Times, 19 November 1976. Senator Withers repeated this, verbatim, in the Senate. It was in response to a question from Senator McIntosh (Ibid., p.2109, 18 November 1976).

changed since it took its principled stand in favour of non-intervention and self-determination in December 1975. On the other, it was passively accommodating Indonesia's integration of East Timor, to the extent that Indonesian spokespersons appeared to care little about publicly implying that the Australian Government's official policy amounted to 'duplicity'.[1]

On the third matter, it was the government leader in the Senate, Senator Withers, who confirmed that the government would refuse visas to two leading members of Fretilin. In mid-October, Opposition backbencher, Fry, had sought the Prime Minister's view regarding possible Fretilin requests to enter Australia. Fraser indicated that 'any movements into and out of Australia would be judged on the normal criteria which applied'.[2] While Rogero Lobato and Maris Alkartiri claimed to be Ministers of the exiled East Timor Government, wishing to come to Australia on 'government-to-government' business, Senator Withers confirmed that the visas, in this instance, could not be issued, as the Australian Government did 'not recognize the Fretilin movement as a government and [thus] did not propose to enter into official discussions...'.[3]

Critical questioning continued unabated in the Parliament, straddling the period of these decisions and issues, the first anniversary of the Indonesian invasion, and the final days before the closing down of Parliament for Christmas 1976. In a statement to the House of Representatives on 7 December, Fry reflected on the year since the invasion:

> Twelve months after the expedition of aggression which set out to create stability in East Timor, we find the area of instability which is likely to continue indefinitely. What has been the role of the Australian Government and the Australian people? I suggest it has been one of continuing appeasement ... The situation has now been reached where Indonesia is dictating the policy of the Australian Government ... The Indonesian Government stands condemned for its brutal aggression ... for its blatant disregard for the UN resolution to withdraw and to allow the Timorese people the fundamental

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1 This was an interpretation of one part of General Sudharmono's comments following Fraser's departure from Jakarta. See Viviani, N., "Australians and The Timor Issue: II", p.255. This is examined more fully in Chapter Eight.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.101, p.1841, 14 October 1976.

3 The Age, 18 November 1976.

right of self-determination... We, as Australians stand condemned....[1]

The Dunn Report

Indonesian brutality was to emerge as a major issue in the Parliament throughout the following year, fuelled by assertions and counter-assertions over the duplicity of both the Whitlam and Fraser governments. Integral to two major debates in each of the parliamentary chambers was the James Dunn Report, which alleged Indonesian atrocities following the 1975 invasion, and gave rise to an inquiry in Washington by a Congressional Sub-Committee on Human Rights.

While such a hearing was a major and positive step for those pressing the issue, it failed to draw Congressional disapproval of Indonesia's actions in the former colony. Nevertheless, it did anger the Indonesians, prodded the Australian press into action and, to a degree, internationalized the East Timor issue. Moreover, this course of events was a setback for Peacock's careful rebuilding of the relationship, as was a censure motion in the Parliament over his discussions in Bali with Indonesian officials twenty months earlier. These developments served only to frustrate Indonesia which viewed Australia's recognition of its role in East Timor as facilitating wider international acceptance.

J.S. Dunn was an Australian public servant[2] and former Australian Consul in Dili (1962 to 1964). With the backing of ACFOA and the assistance of Australian Catholic Relief and Community Aid Abroad, he visited Portugal early in 1977 with a view to interviewing refugees who had fled the conflict in East Timor and wanted to settle in Australia. During the course of interviews with several hundred East Timorese, Dunn obtained a dossier of disturbing eyewitness accounts of excesses that had been committed by Indonesian troops in the former Portuguese colony. Submitted to Foreign Affairs Minister Peacock on 11 February 1977, the Dunn Report was also circulated widely in Australia, and created

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1 Ibid., H.R., Vol.102, pp.3430-3431, 7 December 1976.

2 Director of Foreign Affairs Group in the Legislative Research Service in the Australian Parliamentary Library.

immediate interest in the Senate[1] with many in the Chamber motivated by what Senator Primmer considered to be 'frightening allegations'.[2] Primmer was joined by Georges in calling for a Senate Select Committee to investigate the allegations, especially that aspect which focused on the deaths of the Australian journalists.[3] What also concerned these politicians was that the Dunn Report was supported by reports and statements made by Labor parliamentarian, Gordon Bryant -- following a visit to Portugal at the same time[4] -- and by Jose Martins, brought to Australia by the AJA in mid-1976.[5]

The broad level of immediate concern generated by the Dunn Report was evident in late February when the executive of the parliamentary group of Amnesty International circulated, in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, a non-party political petition to be sent to US President Carter, who at that time was stressing human rights as a major issue in his new administration's foreign policy.[6] On 11 March, with 95 MP's signatures, the petition was sent to Carter. By late March, Dunn had been called to give evidence before Donald Fraser (the head of the US House of Representatives international relations sub-committee) and the House of Representatives International Relations Sub-Committee on

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1 Questions had been raised by Senators Brown and Wheeldon about the deaths of the five Australian journalists (CPD, Senate, S.71, 16 February 1977, p.60 and p.64). Senators Primmer and Knight raised matters the following week related to recognition of Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor (Ibid., 22 February 1977, p.221-222) and whether or not the Australian Government had been aware that such atrocities had taken place (Ibid., 23 February 1977, p.282).

2 Ibid., S.71, 22 February 1977, p.264.

3 Moves had been underway in the Labor Caucus to have the issue of the atrocities referred to the Senate Select Committee (the Canberra Times, 22 February 1977).

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 14 January 1977.

5 Jolliffe, J., East Timor, p.286. See also Senator Gieltzelt's statement, CPD, Senate, S.71, 23 February 1977, p.346.

6 CPD, Senate, S.71, 24 February, p.435.

Human Rights.[1]

While Peacock made minimal reference to East Timor and the Dunn Report in a major statement on foreign policy when the House of Representatives opened in mid-March,[2] the government moved quickly to isolate itself from Dunn when, on the same day, Indonesia threatened mass demonstrations against the Australian Embassy in Jakarta if allegations of Indonesian atrocities in Timor were allowed to continue. In a brief but blunt statement, Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister Malik indicated that if Dunn chose to make such representations then Indonesia may be forced to take up in public the cruel treatment of Aborigines in Australia.[3] Moreover, the Indonesian Government took the extraordinary step of summoning Australia's Ambassador to Indonesia, Woolcott, to its Foreign Ministry to issue him with a reprimand.[4]

Indonesia's main concern lay less with its relationship with Australia than its relations with the United States; its principal fear was that such allegations could reinforce American criticism of it on the human rights issue, by now more prominent in both Congressional and Administration circles. By implication, this could result in Congress cutting back on American aid to Jakarta, particularly military assistance.[5] In any event, this left Peacock to defuse the row. In the Parliament the following day he said that the Indonesian threat of retaliation was an 'off-the-cuff' remark. Moreover, he indicated that Dunn, although a foreign affairs adviser to federal parliamentarians, was 'acting in a purely private and unofficial capacity. Neither he nor his report has any official status'.[6]

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1 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue: II", p.257.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.104, p.203, 15 March 1977. There had been an earlier but brief sitting of the House of Representatives between 15 and 24 February 1977 during which there was little reference to developments in East Timor. See only question from Garrick to Eric Robinson on Communications with Timor (CPD, H.R., Vol.103, p.328, 22 February 1977).

3 The Canberra Times, 16 March 1977.

4 The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 March 1977.

5 Ibid.

6 CPD, H.R., Vol.104, p.243, 16 March 1977.

While the government's response was low-key in view of the manner of Indonesia's protestations and threats, it was, nevertheless, consistent with its past attitude to Indonesian provocation on the Timor issue, as were refusals by both Fraser and Peacock to comment on the matter outside the Parliament. Such a situation, however, was unacceptable to government backbenchers and members of the Opposition, and it gave impetus to a series of major and rowdy debates in both Parliamentary Chambers.

In the House of Representatives, Whitlam, Uren, Bryant, Fry and Hayden mounted a strong and at times bitter attack on the government's policy and the attitude of the Indonesian Government.[1] Uren was particularly caustic. He accused the Fraser government of lies, and levelled damning criticism at the continuation of its military assistance programme with Indonesia, at a time when:

> The United States [had] recognized the serious implications of giving military aid to aggressors which use this military aid against the small and weak nations. [Moreover] ... when the United States Congress has begun to sift the facts on East Timor, the Fraser government is making play on its relationship with its great and powerful friend -- Indonesia.[2]

What particularly outraged the Opposition were Indonesia's threats of reprisals. Accordingly, Peacock was called upon for assurances that Dunn would have the full protection of the Australian Government while travelling overseas the following week.[3] In other developments, Fry demanded the recall of Ambassador Woolcott,[4] while Hayden, by now considered in some circles to be a Labor leadership contender, made his strongest statement on the issue.

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1 CPD, H.R., Vol.104, pp.210-234, 15 March 1977.

2 Ibid., p.221.

3 Question from Uren to Peacock, Ibid., p.243, 16 March 1977. Questioned similarly in the Senate by Senator Primmer, Senator Withers indicated that while the Foreign Minister found some of Dunn's allegations disturbing, he believed that others were 'clearly exaggerated and unsubstantiated'. Ibid., Senate, S.72, 16 March 1977, p.188.

4 Fry considered Woolcott should be replaced with someone who would not be 'seen as being so identified with Indonesia on the Timor question and who is prepared to concentrate on explaining our point of view to the Indonesian Government rather than trying to tell the Australian Government the best way that it can accept the Indonesian point of view on Timor'. Ibid., H.R., Vol.104, p.263, 16 March 1977.

The Opposition defence spokesperson considered that while 'the seizure of a territory adjacent to Australia is a serious enough matter in itself ... persistent reports of brutal treatment of the civilian population deserves our closest attention'.[1]

Hayden, like Uren, questioned Australia's policy of appeasement, and whether Australia could continue to ignore such developments in East Timor because of concern at the possible harm to the relationship that an Australian initiative might engender. Of particular concern was that an Australian posture of appeasement would backfire if international pressures were brought to bear on the situation. Such a posture would not only affect Australia's integrity and sincerity in international relations, but also its credibility in Jakarta.[2]

While many of the government backbenchers defended the Fraser administration's policy[3] -- with the view, in many cases, that it had inherited the Timor 'mess'[4] and that Fretilin was a communist grouping trying to 'gain a foothold on the mainland'[5] -- the government faced a revolt in the Senate over its decision to oppose a committee of enquiry into the East Timor situation, and widespread dissatisfaction in the Coalition itself over what was considered a soft government line on Timor. Believed to have been taken at the Cabinet level, the decision outraged Coalition MPs, 14 of whom had signed the parliamentary petition to President Carter.[6] In an indication of the difficulties that the government faced, Senator Bonner accused the Fraser administration of appeasing the

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1 Ibid., p.259.

2 CPD, H.R., Vol.104, p.259, 16 March 1977.

3 Ibid, p.218 ff, 15 March 1977. This debate also embroiled Dr. Klugman, Brown, Cohen, Calder, Keith Johnson, Hodgman and James. Bryant also placed on record a letter he delivered to the Prime Minister of Portugal (Dr. Soares) in January requesting he reject Indonesian demands that his government approve East Timor's integration into Indonesia. Ibid., p.400, 17 March 1977.

4 See Connolly's comments Ibid., p.227. This was a point vigorously pursued by Neil, Ibid., p.234.

5 CPD, H.R. Vol.104, p.219, 15 March 1977.

6 The Age, 18 March 1977.

Indonesian Government, and indicated he would cross the floor of the Senate Chamber if the inquiry was not held. It was against this background that Labor's Senator Gietzelt moved the same day to call on the Senate 'to rise above party politics ... and set in motion the machinery for an important proper review of the tragedy in Timor'.[1]

But not everyone in the Senate shared these views. Pressure was mounting within the government for Dunn's removal from his position in the Parliamentary Library.[2] A member of the joint foreign affairs and defence committee, Senator Young, accused Dunn of involving himself in the politics of, and displaying a bias against, Indonesia in an interview Dunn had made in The Netherlands on 10 March -- a bias which Young considered Dunn would carry with him to the Congressional hearing in Washington.[3]

In a similar, though broader theme, Senator Sim, the Liberal Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, warned that Dunn's evidence had the potential to worsen the now serious rift in Australia's relationship with Indonesia. He stressed Indonesia's importance as an influential member of ASEAN -- an association that was the most important element in Australia's Asian policies, particularly in the economic arena. Acknowledging the dilemma that faced Australia's foreign policy and the underlying difficulty in applying moral values to international relationships, Sim considered that there was a need for Australians 'to understand the Asian people whose human rights were so much different to ours'.[4]

Such a view was fundamental to these events in the parliament and exposed the difficulties which the Fraser administration faced in trying to pursue a two-pronged East Timor policy of 'realism' and 'principle'. While the Indonesian Government was impatient and annoyed by the continuing debate within Australia over the Timor issue, Dunn's activities and the resultant parliamentary debate

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1 CPD, Senate, S.72, 17 March 1977, p.317.

2 Early stirrings came from Senator Sir Magnus Cormack. Ibid., 9 March 1977, p.9.

3 CPD, Senate, S.72, 15 March 1977, p.122. See also the Age, 16 March 1977.

4 The Canberra Times, 18 March 1977.

touched a special nerve of self-interest. In essence, Dunn had dug up the Timor skeleton which Fraser had tried to bury on his Indonesian visit five months earlier. But while Dunn continually insisted that his role had been strictly private, there seems little doubt that Indonesia preferred to represent him as having official status. In this way its diplomatic bluster created more embarrassment for the Fraser Government.

For many, Dunn's investigations were seen as the most thorough and most widely circulated record of the events that had taken place in East Timor following Indonesia's invasion, and they tended to corroborate other reports filtering out of the territory about Indonesia's excesses.[1] While it has been noted that Dunn 'had taken great pains to satisfy himself that the witnesses he spoke to were not exaggerating their accounts',[2] details of Dunn's allegations were predictably less than convincing to some observers -- particularly those that suggested that 100 000 people had been killed either in the civil war which preceded the invasion or in the invasion itself.[3] On the other hand, accounts related to the committing of atrocities gained credence from the fact that the Brawijaya divisional troops who took over Dili on 7 and 8 December were hastily withdrawn back to Java, where their officers were reportedly disciplined.[4]

The Indonesian response was inevitably and correspondingly sharp, Foreign Affairs Minister Malik giving Australia 'a dirty little kick in the diplomatic testes ...':[5] a threat of mass demonstrations, the lodging of a strong protest and a statement that Dunn's testimony to the Congressional hearings would serve only to harm Indonesia's relations with other countries, particularly the United States. Herein lay Indonesia's major concerns. First, that the issue was being internationalized, and

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1 Nicol, B., Timor. The Stillborn Nation, p.314.

2 Ibid., p.316.

3 See, for example, Arndt's careful assessment of the evidence in Arndt, H.W., "Timor: Vendetta against Indonesia", Quadrant, December 1979, pp.13-17.

4 Hastings, P., the Sydney Morning Herald, April 1972.

5 Michael Barnard in the Age, 19 March 1977.

second, that Dunn's information raised the possibility (a possibility explored by Senator McIntosh in the Australian Parliament) that the Indonesian use of American military equipment in Timor -- which was prohibited by United States laws -- would be made public.

Canberra's reaction to such bluster revealed the lengths to which the Fraser administration was prepared to go to accommodate Indonesia. But the problems inherent in Australia's Indonesia policy arose from two related causes and they were repeatedly canvassed throughout the parliamentary debate. On one level, as we noted earlier, successive Australian governments had insisted that the relationship should be a 'special' one -- rather closer and more important than those with other regional neighbours. Whitlam, in particular, stressed the importance of Australia's regional policies and, in the wider search for its own independent policies, of the bilateral relationship with Indonesia.[1] On another level, and arising out of this, the Fraser government had been anxious, particularly after the Prime Minister's visit to Indonesia in October, to submerge the differences which erupted over Timor under this wider 'close' relationship -- continuing to at least acknowledge Australia's different views on the issue.

As stated in Chapter Seven, during his trip to Jakarta, Fraser adopted the diplomatic expedient of simply pointing to -- but not restating -- Australia's earlier Timor policy, which included the withdrawal of Indonesian troops. Moreover, Fraser made much of the total relationship, of which Timor was only a part, and of the future, as distinct from the past. While this was tidy in diplomatic terms, Fraser's strategy ran into problems, including Indonesia's attempt to take even more ground than the Australians were willing to give, and some domestic political flak, especially within the Parliament.

However, the change of emphasis had been made and 'realism' transcended 'principle'. The government would ride out the storm and, in time, the Timor issue would fade. Then the Dunn Report emerged, the Indonesian's reacted and Australia's uneasy realism-principle mix had come unstuck again. This left Peacock to again mend fences, avoiding at all costs any statement that could further provoke Indonesian anger. But for those divided in the Parliament

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[1] See Part Three, p.284.

over Australia's policy of acquiescence and over whether it was in either Australia's long-term interests or the interests of relations between the two countries, the next ten months were to prove crucial.

Australian Government Duplicity

Over these months the question of alleged Indonesian atrocities and criticisms of duplicity on the part of the Fraser and Whitlam governments in Indonesia's actions were central to the debate on a proposed select committee on East Timor, moved by Labor's Senator Gietzelt. In rejecting such an inquiry the government put forward four major arguments. The first, put by Senator Withers,[1] was that East Timor was not a special case, that there had been other examples in the world of internal and external aggression -- for example Angola and Chile -- and that, therefore, the Australian Parliament should not be particularly concerned about East Timor. The second was that Australia's relations with its nearest neighbours were important, and that such an inquiry could upset the basis of such relations.[2] The third canvassed the notion that such an inquiry could inhibit the availability of aid to, or the ability of refugees to leave from, East Timor.[3] The final argument stated that the Senate did not have the capacity to conduct such an inquiry successfully.[4]

To the Opposition, such arguments were specious.[5] First,

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1 CPD, Senate, S.72, 24 March 1977, pp.523-527. Withers, pursued all four arguments in his speech, with individual government Senators pursuing each argument as a major theme in their subsequent speeches.

2 See Senator Scott's speech, CPD, Senate, S.72, 24 March 1977, pp.530-534.

3 See Senator Knight's speech, Ibid., pp.745-750, 31 March 1977.

4 Refer to Wither's speech, Ibid., p.524. Withers argued that the case presented by Gietzelt did not come within the scope of a Senate Committee; he also considered that any proposed committee would not have the power to seek and obtain evidence outside Australia.

5 See the following speeches by: Senator Gietzelt, Ibid., 17 March 1977, p.316-317 and, 21 April 1977, p.921-923; Senator Wheeldon, Ibid., 24 March 1977, pp.528-530; Senator Button, Ibid., 24 March, pp.534-536; Senator McIntosh,

there were overpowering historical, legal, strategic and humanitarian reasons that impelled Australia to take a special interest in East Timor. Second, while it was desirable that Australia have good relations with its neighbours, such relations should not cause Australia to ignore the implications of actions by any of its neighbours. In this context, many in the Opposition considered good relations between countries, if they were to be creditable, involved directness, honesty and mutual respect.

Third, there was no evidence to suggest that the Indonesian Government had threatened that, should such an inquiry go ahead, no one would be allowed into East Timor. Thus, it was difficult to sustain the argument (as the government was) that an inquiry would inhibit aid to East Timor and Australia's ability to evacuate refugees from the former colony. Finally, the opposition totally rejected the notion that the Senate did not have the capacity to conduct such an inquiry. It was argued that the Senate was not only competent to hold such an inquiry but had proven so in other inquiries into Australia's affairs with other countries, including Indonesia.[1]

The debate continued until late May, but the vote to set up the inquiry was lost, despite Senators Bonner and Missen crossing the floor of the Senate to vote with the Opposition.[2] While many involved in this debate, from both sides of the political fence, pleaded for a bipartisan approach to the matter of an inquiry,[3] there were those who found it an appropriate occasion for political

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Ibid., 24 March, pp.540-542; Senator Keefe, Ibid., 31 March 1977, pp.739-745; Senator Grimes, Ibid., 31 March 1977, p.750-753; Senator Wriedt, Ibid., 21 April 1977, pp.908-910; Senator Georges, Ibid., 21 April 1977, pp.920-921.

1 Government members also found difficulties with many of these government propositions. See, for example, Senator Missen's speech, Ibid., 24 March 1977, pp.536-540; Senator Bonner's speech, Ibid., 31 March 1977, pp.733-739; Senator Knight, Ibid., 31 March 1972, pp.747-750; Senator Kilgariff, Ibid., 31 March 1977, pp.753-755. Only Senators Bonner and Missen, however, crossed the floor to join the Opposition in voting.

2 CPD, Senate, S.73, 26 May 1977, pp.1488-1489.

3 See speeches by Opposition Senators Gietzelt, Wheelden, Button, Keefe, and by Government members Knight, Missen, Bonner, and Kilgariff.

point-scoring.[1] Others were genuinely concerned that if such an inquiry was held, Indonesia's reaction would sink any prospect of Australian humanitarian assistance being received by the East Timorese people.[2] Such concerns were also shared by members of the House of Representatives. By this time, however, many had had their attention turned to Peacock by allegations in late March that the Foreign Affairs Minister, at a meeting with two Indonesians in Bali on 24 September 1975,[3] had urged Jakarta to annex the then disputed Portuguese colony, by force.

Speaking during a Grievance Debate, Fry indicated that he had received information from a credible source which disclosed that the Foreign Affairs Minister had told Harry Tjan and Jusuf Wanandi[4] that a Liberal government would not complain about an Indonesian incorporation of East Timor, and that he had hoped Indonesia would act swiftly and efficiently. Moreover, Fry said it had been suggested that Peacock's views had been used by hawkish generals to persuade President Suharto to agree to the proposed invasion.[5]

Earlier in the day Fry had put a series of questions along similar lines to Peacock who, in his reply, not only considered that what was implicit in Fry's allegations was the very antithesis of the views he had been expressing at the time, but that Tjan and Wanandi had undertaken to brief him 'without my knowledge'.[6] By early May, Peacock faced charges of misleading the Parliament over his response to Fry's allegations, following the leaking of a

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1 Refer to speeches by Senators Scott and Sir Magnus Cormack, CPD, Senate, S.72, 21 April 1977, pp.910-915.

2 See speeches, for example, by Senators Kilgariff and Knight.

3 Whitlam had raised the issue of Peacock's visit during a Grievance Debate in April 1976. CPD, H.R., Vol.99, p.1744, 29 April 1976.

4 Respectively, a member of the staff of Indonesia's Centre for Strategic and International Studies, and private secretary to General Ali Moertopo. Jusuf Wanandi was also head of the centre.

5 CPD, H.R., Vol.104, pp.806-807, 31 March 1977.

6 CPD, H.R., Vol.104, p.795, 31 March 1977.

secret diplomatic cable on 1 May 1977.[1] The cable, sent from Woolcott to the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs (A.P. Renouf) on the day of the meeting, indicated Woolcott was under the impression that his Foreign Minister arranged the Bali meeting before leaving Canberra with the then Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, Mr Her Tasning.

Armed with this information the Opposition subjected Peacock to a censure motion and called for his resignation. During some heated scenes, the Opposition also managed to involve Fraser in clashes over leaked and retained documents and varying versions of the real policies of the Fraser and Whitlam governments. While these events began in Question Time, and continued into personal explanations and on to the censure debate, only the Opposition leaders -- Whitlam and Uren -- made speeches, before the leader of the House of Representatives, Sinclair, gagged the debate; Peacock survived the censure motion on party lines.[2]

Whatever doubts there may have been about the roles taken at the crucial period in late 1975 by Whitlam, Fraser and Peacock, the perplexity over what the Labor and Coalition groups could and should have done about East Timor continued to be reflected in the Parliament in the reaction to Indonesia's refusal in September to issue visas to members of a parliamentary fact-finding delegation wanting to visit East Timor.[3] The delegation was to have been led by M. Hodgman who had forwarded a submission on to the Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, Mr Nurmathias, on 25 July. The submission remained formally unanswered for six weeks at which time Hodgman presented Nurmathias with a petition signed by 80 members of all parties in the Federal Parliament protesting against Indonesia's obscurantist attitude on the matter.

The Indonesian response was immediate. No delegation would be permitted to enter into East Timor until there was a 'normalization

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1 Ibid., p.1446-1456, 3 May 1977. See also the Courier Mail, 3 May 1977; the Sydney Morning Herald, 3 May 1977; the Herald, 3 May 1977; the Age, 3 May 1977.

2 81 votes to 32 votes. CPD, H.R., Vol.105, p.1455, 3 May 1977.

3 Ibid., p.737, 6 September 1977; Ibid., p.808, 7 September 1977 and pp.1316-1318, 20 September 1977. The Mercury, 1 September 1977; the Age, 1 September 1977; the Age, 7 September 1977, the Canberra Times, 7 September 1977.

of the economic situation in East Timor'. Hodgman, supported by James and Neil, bitterly condemned such a position, and revealed later that the Indonesian Embassy subsequently wrote to him to indicate that it was their view that such a fact-finding mission would be 'an intervention in [Indonesian] affairs'.[1] While this caused a furor in the Parliament it was short lived and discussion was confined to the determined efforts of those few parliamentarians who attempted to keep the issue alive. By the time the Parliament went into recess in early November the Timor issue had receded from prominence in the parliamentary arena. Before the Parliament again met, Peacock announced, on 21 January 1978, Australia's de facto recognition of the Indonesian integration of East Timor. From this point onwards, and in the face of bitter condemnation from both sides of the House of Representatives and Senate, the Australian Government spoke of the Timor problem as being a matter that was, in the interests of the Australia-Indonesia relationship, best laid to rest, although it rallied to Indonesia's defence in the Parliament whenever allegations of Indonesia's harsh occupation policies were made.[2]

Conclusion

Throughout the first period (1974-1975), Whitlam's Timor policy came under increasing scrutiny in the Federal Parliament. However, before the debate generated by the invasion scare in February 1975, the Opposition leadership was complacent, to say the least, in its attitude towards developments in East Timor. While this may point to a measure of consensus between the Labor government and Opposition on Australia's policy interests in the issue, this was to quickly change. Important here were the activities in the second half of 1974 of Fretilin's Ramos Horta who, while having limited success in lobbying MPs across the broad

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1 The Age, 1 September 1977.

2 See for example Adjournment Debate in the Senate in early November 1979, Ibid., 6 November 1979, pp.1924-1935; and Matter of Urgency Debate, Ibid., 8 November 1979, pp.2052-2058. Refer also to Adjournment Debate in the House of Representatives, Ibid., H.R., Vol.116, pp.1878-1882, 10 October 1979; and "Discussion of Matter of Public Importance" in November 1979, Ibid., pp.2896-2907, 13 November 1979.

political spectrum, secured the interest of Andrew Peacock.[1]

While such an alliance coincided with carping criticism from Peacock of government policy, such criticism -- in October 1974 and February 1975 -- together with that emanating from an increasingly disturbed government backbench, failed to impress Whitlam. While many Labor MPs had difficulty in reconciling their own government's policy with Australia's traditional support for self-determination, the Prime Minister did not and, like Hasluck nine years earlier over developments in Indonesia following the coup, discouraged any debate on the matter. This included absenting himself from the Parliament and leaving it to a handful of Ministers to explain the government's case -- many of whom did not share their leader's position on the matter. A second dilemma they faced, however, and one that was evident in the Opposition's ranks, was in reconciling arguments for self-determination with Indonesia's interests, and the importance of Australia's relationship with Indonesia.

As the crisis deepened, Whitlam maintained his firm grip on the issue, not only in the parliamentary forum but also within the Cabinet and Caucus arenas.[2] The parliamentary delegation, whose findings following their visit in March 1975 were well received by both the Labor Caucus and Opposition, had less success with Whitlam and failed to shake the Prime Minister's resolve to see East Timor integrated into Indonesia.

By August 1975, attitudes in the Parliament began to gravitate around ideological and politico-strategic perceptions (on both sides of the political fence) of where Australia's interests lay in the East Timor issue. Up until then, discussion had steered away from such factors. Following the UDT coup, however, they emerged as critical elements -- predominantly in the views of the Opposition. It was inevitable, therefore, that the subtle convergence between the substantive positions of both Whitlam and Peacock would be grossly overshadowed by the views of conservative leaders such as Anthony and Fraser -- a situation that would not have been lost on Indonesian observers in Jakarta.

The underlying irony of those events, and arising principally from Whitlam's insistence on keeping a tight lid on the issue, was

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1 See Chapter Seven.

2 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.202.

that it served only to cloak the Parliament in a veil of ignorance of developments taking place in East Timor. This made for an undisciplined, misconceived, and at times totally unsophisticated, parliamentary debate. A bipartisan understanding in the Federal Parliament of developments in East Timor together with a clear signal from the government of the day at the policy level would surely have cast doubts in the minds of those Indonesians who were planning, with the Australian Government's knowledge,[1] a military solution to the 'Timor problem'.

In such a situation, however, with Whitlam continuing to ignore ALP backbench and Opposition pressures for the Australian Government to take a firmer and, as the civil war worsened, compassionate role in events in East Timor, many of these parliamentarians were compelled, as they had been earlier in the year, to seek their own understanding of developments in the territory -- principally through visits as members of a parliamentary delegation. In this context, these delegations -- like those in the late 1960s and early 1970s -- provided MPs from across the political spectrum with the opportunity to obtain firsthand knowledge of events and to return to stimulate parliamentary and public interest in the Timor issue. Many parliamentarians[2] provided a major focus for broadening discontent in Australia with the government's policy, and it was only a matter of time before:

> groups involved in the Timor issue made their pressure effective; they lobbied MPs on both sides of the House of Representatives with conspicuous success on the Labor side, they laid siege to Minister's offices, organized demonstrations and meetings with foreign diplomats and

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1 See Dale van Atta and Brian Toohey, 'The Timor Papers', part 1, the National Times, 30 May - 5 June 1982 and Hall, Richard, The Secret State, Cassel Australia Ltd, Sydney, 1978, pp.149-150.

2 These included, from the March 1975 delegation, Messrs. Kerrin, Fry, Gun, and Clayton; and Senators Gietzelt and McIntosh. All were members of the Labor Caucus' Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee which had widespread contacts in the bureaucracy, with professional and semi-professional groups and the wider community. Gietzelt was also the Chairman of the all-party Friends of East Timor parliamentary group. Fry and Gietzelt were again to return to East Timor in September 1975, accompanied by the Liberal MP, Senator Bonner.

propagandized in universities and work places....[1]

Yet, even though this high level of parliamentary interest was sustained throughout 1975, emerging as an important dimension of wider dissenting opinion on the East Timor issue, in the final analysis, it can only be assessed to have been unsuccessful, because it failed to change the government's policy. Two factors, however, mitigated against success. First, the issues surrounding the East Timor imbroglio were far from clear to the majority of those parliamentarians who took an interest. Moreover, Australia's East Timor policy was Whitlam policy and he took few into his confidence, not even his Foreign Affairs Minister, when discussing these issues.[2] Second, with the government moving from one domestic crisis to another, many in the Labor party were constrained in directing any criticism at their leader's handling of the East Timor issue and thus undermining the Labor government's prospects for survival in office.[3]

In the period from the Indonesian invasion until Australia's recognition of East Timor's integration into Indonesia in January 1978, the new Fraser government was faced not only with an irreversible fait accompli, but also a growing hostility towards Indonesia's East Timor policy within Australia. As already discussed, many within the Federal Parliament had been infuriated by Indonesia's actions and Whitlam's mitigating role. The increasingly ambiguous stance adopted by the Fraser administration, however, served only to exacerbate this prevailing bitterness, and paved the way for a two year debate filled with acrimony and political vilification.

During this period three separate strands of feeling on the East Timor issue can be distinguished. There were those who recognized the former Portuguese colony's inalienable right to self-determination (and later, independence) on legal and, principally, humanitarian grounds. This stand was represented by Labor's Fry and Uren as well as by Baume and Bonner in the Liberal

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1 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue, p.209. For an alternative view of the effectiveness of the Australian Timor Movement see Jolliffe, J., "Timor: A Year of Struggle", Arena, Nos.42-43, 1976, p.7.

2 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.202.

3 Ibid., p.211.

Party. Alongside, were two other views: one, represented by Martyr and Harradine, which stressed the ideological elements of the issue and another, which represented a pragmatic view, such as those expressed by Chipp and Button.

Earliest criticisms emanated from the government side, and focused on Fretilin and the East Timor moratorium within Australia. Inevitably, many of its arguments revealed strong ideological sentiments, and the resulting debates embroiled spokespersons from across the political spectrum in some bitter exchanges. The conservatives, however, were divided on the merits in conducting the debate on such terms. The tenor of speeches made by conservative representatives such as Martyr and Harradine concerned many, and was resisted by members within the coalition (and the Opposition) on party and moral grounds.

Chipp, in particular, as in the 1960s, was concerned that much of the sentiment which marked the ideologically driven Vietnam debates of that period would re-emerge and engulf the objectivity required for a level-headed analysis of the East Timor situation. While Chipp found support from some quite unlikely quarters amongst Opposition backbenchers, he failed to dampen a hard core of dissenters within the Opposition ranks.

At the forefront here was Ken Fry, whose essentially humanitarian views contrasted markedly with the ideologically-based offerings from the government's backbench. However, in shifting the focus of debate away, for instance, from Fretilin's political credentials, the Opposition tended to concentrate increasingly on the nature of the Suharto regime. This gave rise to strong anti-Indonesian sentiments within the Parliament, with Indonesia's motives in relation to East Timor being seen to be territorially expansionist. Views such as these embroiled members from both parties, overshadowing those held by the few who critically and objectively appraised the prospects for an effective role for the UN in the East Timor situation.

In this context, Prime Minister Fraser's efforts to hinder the work of the UN representative ran contrary to bipartisan and, in some instances, individual efforts to have the UN involved. This created a furor in the Parliament, with many on the government benches entangled in the moral dilemma of reconciling their private position on a role for the UN with the need to adopt a collective position that publicly endorsed Fraser's actions. Such a dilemma,

however, was overshadowed by government criticisms of the Whitlam government's role in, and vulnerability on, the East Timor embroglio.

In the event, the ambiguities of Fraser's position were not to cause the government any major embarrassment in the parliamentary arena. However, the bitterness of the debate surrounding the Labor government's role served to obscure the degree to which both the Fraser administration and the Opposition were in agreement on the underlying objective of any Australian foreign policy initiatives on East Timor -- stable and continuing relations with Indonesia. During this period, the government's resolve in pursuing such a foreign policy goal found increasing acceptance on the part of the press, which saw little was to be gained in harsh and continuing criticism of Indonesia.

Yet, the cross-party alliance of opinion that had emerged was not insignificant in influencing the government's policy. That is to say, the Fraser administration was constrained from responding immediately to Indonesian overtures that it should recognize East Timor's incorporation into the Indonesian State. This left Fraser to pursue many of the tactics employed in the parliamentary arena by his predecessor: deferring explanations of government policy to other government spokespersons, while attempting to blanket the Parliament in ignorance of developments concerning, and taking place in, East Timor. While Fraser, like Whitlam before him, faced a hostile forum, he confronted, by virtue of its links to the wider Timor lobby, a far better informed Parliament.

However, it became clear that while Indonesia's actions found little support publicly or privately in the Parliament, a concern for the Australia-Indonesia relationship soon transcended any concerns related to the plight of the East Timorese, and the Fraser government emerged more determined in its public support for mending the relationship, while becoming less willing to provide any solutions. The Labor Party, on the other hand, became more closely identified with broadening opinion against Indonesia and the conduct of its East Timor policies. Similarly, the two sides were divided over East Timor's right to self-determination -- a division symbolizing acute differences of view about whether Indonesia was to be treated as a major aggressive power in the region or as a vast Asian country which was important and vital to Australia's strategic interests. Such a division was also evident

in the wider community throughout this five-year period and it is to an examination of the matters held strongly at issue by groups and individuals within it, that we now turn.

CHAPTER TEN

MORALITY AND PRAGMATISM: THE MANIFESTATION OF AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY OPINION

This chapter focuses on other major contributors to the widening debate on the East Timor issue between 1974 and 1980. It is concerned with the nature of the groups and individuals involved, the opinions expressed, and with the ways in which these opinions were presented. The prolonged period of development within East Timor, and the circumstances surrounding it, permitted extensive and varied attitudes to emerge. An assessment of this is made not only on how the matter was approached but on whether there was a successful raising of the level of public awareness of the underlying issues involved, and whether this had an impact on government policy. In completing this picture of public opinion on the East Timor issue, the chapter again focuses on some of the groups and individuals of the earlier period,[1] as well as on those elements that emerged in response to the circumstances surrounding the fate of the former Portuguese colony.

COMMUNITY OPINION

Continuing Notions of Threat

As noted in Chapter Six, there was a lessening in consciousness by the Australian public in the early 1970s of any Indonesian threat. By 1976, those who perceived a threat approached almost half the electorate, but were outnumbered by those who did not. In the following years, however, there was a revival of this threat consciousness, with the number of people convinced that Australia's security was endangered by some countries returning to the levels of 1967.[2] However, a dissipation

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1 A study of the AIA's Annual Reports (1975-1980) indicates that no interest was expressed (or documented) in the East Timor issue or any other major Indonesian issue which is under review in this thesis. It is therefore, not examined during this later period.

2 Huck, A., "A Note on the Volatility of Threats", p.89. See also tables in Chapter Six.

in the preoccupation with China, that marked the 1960s, had been paralleled by a rise in concern about the Soviet Union. By 1978, concern about Indonesia varied little from that about China.

In a poll taken in April 1974, Indonesia was considered by seven percent (7%) of the population to pose a threat to Australia -- the majority of whom were professionals with tertiary education -- an attitude which ran against the general patterns of that period. By 1976, the community's fear of external aggression had grown rapidly with the Soviet Union, China and Indonesia seen as the outstanding potential aggressors.[1] Respondents who considered that a threat existed were asked to rank Australia's five most likely external aggressors. The countries least frequently excluded from the ranking, scored the highest. On this basis, only 12 percent (12%) excluded the Soviet Union, 17 percent (17%) excluded China and 28 percent (28%) excluded Indonesia. Moreover, the fear of threat was stronger among younger people and significantly stronger among women, Liberal voters, middle-income earners, clerical and 'lower' white-collar workers.

While it appears that Australians' historical perceptions of an external threat are influenced by the government in office at any particular time -- declining with the accession of the Labor government and rising with the return of the L-NCP government -- Indonesia's close third position as the next greatest potential threat seems unrelated to this, because there are no indications as to how (at this particular time) those who were polled saw Indonesia's actions in East Timor.

East Timor

In this context, a poll taken six months earlier in September 1975 and held in the wake of the UDT coup at the height of the civil war conditions that ensued, revealed that of the 86 percent (86%) who had a view on the Timor issue, two out of three stated that the former colony should become independent rather than part of Indonesia (28 percent). Moreover, while there were at least two out of three Australians who were against Australia sending troops to the small island, opinion was two to one against Indonesia

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[1] 51 percent (51%) of Australians feared an external threat in a survey conducted in March 1976. This compared with 36 percent (36%) in February 1974 and 42 percent (42%) in August 1971.

taking it by force, even if a left-wing group was to gain control there.

While it is significant that a high proportion of Australians supported East Timor's right to self-determination, the high proportion of those who were undecided (44 percent) indicates the confusion and uncertainty that existed within the general community about the basic issues involved. The significant majority (75 percent of both ALP and L-NCP voters) which was against any kind of Australian or Indonesian military intervention is, in historical terms, perhaps surprising. In a poll conducted in May 1975, on the issue of communism on the Asian mainland, most Australians believed that communist rule would be detrimental for the people of Cambodia and South Vietnam, and that it would lead to attempts at a similar communist takeover in nearby countries.[1]

A second poll was conducted in February 1976, following the Indonesian invasion of East Timor and the accession of the Fraser government. The significant majority who strongly opposed Indonesia's actions was made up almost equally of ALP (49%) and LCP (51%) supporters, while a high proportion of respondents (38% of ALP voters and 31% of LCP voters) remained undecided. Again, this reflected the confusion surrounding the issue, which was now under the scrutiny of the Fraser administration. Such a lack of support for Indonesia's East Timor policy (13 percent of Labor voters and 18 percent of L-NCP voters) was not unexpected when the vitriolic press and parliamentary debate being waged at the time are taken into account. However, while this poll reflected an extremely negative view and showed that party differences were insignificant, it was extremely limited and narrow. No questions, for example, were put to the general public on other aspects of the East Timor imbroglio, including the scope for a solution.

Nevertheless, any policy decisions that the Fraser government had to make on East Timor took place in a climate which, according to the polls, was one of substantial public disapproval of Indonesia's actions. Furthermore, a 1977 poll revealed that an undercurrent of hostility toward Indonesia was evident in public opinion. While 36 percent of Australians considered Indonesia to be 'aggressive', only six percent considered her 'trustworthy' and only two in five Australians believed that she was of any

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[1] APOP (The Gallup Method), No.05/5/75, p.2.

importance to Australia.[1] Such opposition can be broadly accounted for in terms of a concern about Indonesia's perceived intentions in the region. However, while the Timor issue was increasingly seen as having national interest and as a territorial one by other opinion holders over this 1974-76 period (in which historical factors reinforced security fears) by denying any kind of military role for Australia, there is no evidence to suggest that a desire existed within the wider community to assert Australia's interests.

NON-GOVERNMENT LOBBY GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS : THE SEEDS OF DISSENSION

1. The Solidarity Groups

In November 1974, following the first meeting in September between Suharto and Whitlam in Wonosobo and the visit of Fretilin's Ramos Horta (who had come to Australia to make contact with likely supporters inside and outside the Australian Parliament) the Campaign for an Independent East Timor (CIET) was formed in Sydney. This first organization to be established specifically with a concern for the future of Portuguese Timor, emanated from the Southern African Liberation Centre (SALC),[2] with the support of the trade union and peace movements.

Largely made up of students and trade unionists, the CIET quickly established branches in most major centres in Australia, including Darwin, where it was soon active in monitoring broadcasts from Timor. While many of the activist unions in Sydney were associated with the CIET (including the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union, waterside workers and railway unions), its activities overlapped with those of the anti-Vietnam war and Springbok (South African Rugby) movements. The Campaign quickly organized demonstrations along the same lines, with the most notable being the occupation of the Indonesian Embassy in September 1975. The catalyst here was Ramos Horta who, in attempting to mount a parliamentary delegation to East Timor, had been successful in finding support among MPs, trade unionists, churchmen and the

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1 The Age, 12 April 1977. See Appendix D.

2 The CIET shared an office with the centre - which was concerned at the time with the then Portuguese colonies in Africa and, by extension, with Portuguese Timor - in the Sydney business district.

voluntary aid organizations.[1]

In view of Australia's proximity to East Timor, it was inevitable that those Timorese political activists who were able to reach Australia would seek out (and rely upon) the many individuals and groups which were increasingly taking an interest in the East Timor issue to channel information about the struggle to regional and international forums. By late 1975, the solidarity group, CIET, a nucleus for the many groups which had been galvanized into action by the deteriorating situation in East Timor (including the support groups the Friends of East Timor (FOET) and the Melbourne-based Australia-East Timor Association (AETA)), utilized such pressure effectively. With public opinion polls[2] indicating a strong degree of popular support for the East Timorese claims for self-determination, the solidarity groups were on fertile ground.

Popular support derived initially from memories of the role played by the East Timorese in Australia's fight against the Japanese in the Second World War and in the crucial period leading up to the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, this feeling spread rapidly throughout the community. The CIET had successfully harnessed this public interest and, as information mounted that Indonesia was undertaking activities to undermine the independence movement in East Timor, was joined by a widening array of groups and individuals. This included groups such as Community Aid Abroad (CAA), the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA), the Australian Union of Students (AUS), conservative elements within the trade union movement, and the churches. On another level, individuals emerged to lend their support to East Timor's claims, including James Dunn, parliamentarians Fry and Hodgman and a handful of academics. In the context of Australia's East Timor policy, the invasion scare of February 1975 had served to sustain the momentum of this dissenting opinion. Moreover, while such dissension cut across the political spectrum, it was unified by a small but powerful nucleus of:

'conscious radicals',[3] for whom the moral issue of self-

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1 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.205.

2 See above and Appendix D.

3 A reference to a term from Alan Hughes' Psychology and the Political Experience, London, Cambridge University Press,

> determination was a paramount consideration and these appeared to outnumber those who had latent anti-Indonesian feelings related to the nature of the Suharto regime, its treatment of political prisoners, and its domestic political and economic policies.[1]

However, there were also active groups and individuals, such as B.A. Santamaria and the Australia-Indonesia Business Cooperation Committee (AIBCC), who stressed the importance of Indonesia -- and the Australian-Indonesian relationship -- over and above the nationalist claims for independence by a small group of political activists from East Timor, and who were increasingly seen by this opinion to be left-wing and a destabilizing influence in the region. These groups and individuals are now examined in detail.

2. Non-Government Aid Agencies

As already noted in Chapter Six, the agencies in the field of overseas aid had taken a strong interest in Portuguese Timor as far back as the early 1970s. This interest had centred on the issue of East Timor's right to self-determination and, by 1975 and in the wake of the invasion scare, had extended into a campaign designed to put pressure on the Australian Government.[2] At the ACFOA Annual Council meeting, held in August 1975, and two weeks after the UDT coup in East Timor, this pressure was increased, with the Council resolving to call on the Whitlam government to express its support for the principle of 'independence of choice' for the East Timorese people and to oppose the presence of any external influence on the territory. In what was its first public statement on the East Timor situation and on the issue of self-determination, ACFOA also (unsuccessfully) called on the Australian government to provide economic assistance to the territory, reopen its Consulate in Dili and offer facilities to mediate in the conflict.[3]

1975.

1 Viviani, N., "Australians and the East Timor Issue", p.209.

2 Up until this time, the aid agencies -- including many of the ACFOA member agencies -- were examining ways to render practical assistance to the process of decolonization in the former Portuguese colony and to ensure that the Timorese could exercise the right to self-determination.

3 Hill, H., "The NGOs and East Timor", Development Dossier 2, Second Edition, July 1980, p.10.

Although they were active in the political arena in Australia, there were no ACFOA member agencies in East Timor. The first aid agency to move into the war-torn territory was the Australian Society for Inter-Country Aid - Timor (ASIAT), which had been formed in August 1975 by a Sydney pediatrician, Dr John Whitehall. He had been to East Timor earlier in the year, accompanied by other members of ASIAT,[1] and had held discussions with the leaders of each of the political groupings about the viability of establishing a rural health scheme in East Timor. These talks continued when Ramos Horta was in Australia in June 1975 and by early September ASIAT had five functioning doctors in East Timor. Although all the Portuguese doctors had left at the time of the UDT coup, the Timorese nurses and medical assistants had remained in Dili, thus enabling the ASIAT team to reorganize Dili's medical services within days of its arrival. ASIAT was soon joined by a delegation of members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which proceeded to provide emergency treatment for casualties of the civil war. The ICRC's activities quickly broadened as it set up a tracing service to assist people in their search for missing relatives and undertook visits to prisoners-of-war being held captive by Fretilin troops.[2]

Both ASIAT and the ICRC were able to report on the success of their activities when ACFOA convened a conference in Melbourne in September 1975. These groups were joined at the conference by a parliamentary delegation recently returned from a visit to East Timor.[3] The meeting was attended by representatives of all the major aid organizations -- Freedom from Hunger, Austcare and Community Aid Abroad -- the RSL, the Catholic and Protestant agencies and the CIET. Discussion centred on what the role (if any) of ACFOA's member agencies in East Timor should be. It was decided that all non-governmental aid should be given in consultation with Fretilin and that a 'Task Force' should be set up on East Timor. The first action of the Task Force was to appoint an investigating team to visit the stricken territory to survey

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1 Bill Bancroft and right-wing politician, Michael Darby.

2 Hill, H., "The NGOs and East Timor", p.11.

3 The delegation had consisted of Ken Fry and Senators Gietzelt and Bonner.

both their urgent and long-term needs and to provide guidance on the possible roles of the voluntary agencies.[1]

Upon the team's return at the end of October, its main conclusions were presented to the Task Force. Its main concern centred on the humanitarian needs of the East Timorese, including 'the restoration of peace in the vicinity of the Indonesian border, and ... The urgent need to reduce the widespread bloodshed that would result from a full-scale attack on East Timor'.[2] In this context, it was recommended that ACFOA urgently pressure the Whitlam government to state its unqualified support for self-determination and to apply pressure on Indonesia to stop its 'active support and encouragement of military activities around the border area'. Moreover, the team urged that long-term assistance in the areas of agriculture, health care and education be given, as well as arranging for the provision of Australian volunteers in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry and diesel engineering, for two-year assignments in the territory.[3] However, an immediate concern was the need for food (grain, rice, flour and milk powder), medical supplies and petrol -- the latter to facilitate the distribution of supplies to the outlying reaches of the territory.

ACFOAs response was immediate and a Timor Relief Appeal was launched. With the support of CAA, Australian Catholic Relief, Austcare, Freedom from Hunger and the Australian Council of Churches it had raised over $150 000 by early November and organized a barge -- the 'Alanna Fay' -- to transport items which were identified by the investigating team as being needed in East Timor.[4] While this began a period during which ACFOA member agencies worked closely with the Fretilin administration, and East

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1 "Report on visit to East Timor for the ACFOA Timor Task Force", Australian Council for Overseas Aid, Canberra, October 1975, p.1. The team consisted of James Dunn (leader), Director of the Foreign Affairs Group, Legislative Research Service, Parliament House; Neil O'Sullivan, Projects Officer, CAA; Rev. John Mavor, Secretary, Division of World Christian Action, ACC; Father Mark Raper, S.J. Director, Asian Bureau Australia.

2 Ibid., p.2.

3 Ibid., p.3.

4 For a detailed description of this relief operation see Jolliffe, J., East Timor, pp.189-196.

Timorese church leaders, nuns and priests, the general enthusiasm shared by this small group of humanitarian workers was tempered by mounting concerns about the security situation. This concern was the determining factor in the Australian contingent's decision on 2 December to evacuate East Timor.[1]

However, with their departure and that of the ICRC, went any further opportunity to work with the East Timorese because on 7 December, Indonesia invaded and closed off the territory indefinitely. On that evening, an Australia-East Timor Association (AETA) was formed, and by mid-December, the ACFOA executive had called on the Australian Government to help establish, in East Timor, a zone of neutrality for refugees, as well as to assist in relief distribution. It also called on the Australian Government to pressure Indonesia to allow the return of the ICRC to East Timor, to call on the warring parties to observe the Geneva conventions and to provide facilities for refugees to be brought to Australia. Further, ACFOA called for the suspension of military aid to Indonesia until the military activities in East Timor ceased. In effect, although these demands were ignored, they were to provide the main focus for the many forms of activities of the volunteer agencies for the next three years.

On one level, the distribution of aid was a major concern. However, most of this activity, while it involved other groups, including the Catholic Bishops and trade unions, was frustrated by Australian Government blockades.[2] On another level, the agencies took up the issue of human rights. Spurred by the Dunn Report, they lobbied the Australian Government to address some of the major aspects of Dunn's findings, especially the violent circumstances surrounding the invasion and its aftermath and the appalling conditions in which the Timorese were living in Portugal. In this

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1 The ICRC had secured such a guarantee from the UDT and Fretilin in August. However, it was unsuccessful in securing similar guarantees from Apodeti and Indonesia. For details of the background to the eventual evacuation see Jolliffe, J., East Timor, pp.226-228.

2 Diesel fuel and petrol was part of the shipment carried by the 'Alanna Fay' but it caused difficulties with Australian authorities as an unofficial blockade of fuel for the territory had been in force for some time. An Indonesian blockade throughout 1976 continued to close access to the territory. See Jolliffe, J., East Timor, pp.189, 255 and 296. See also the Age, 17 May 1976.

context, a number of ACFOA agencies took up the question of family reunions as a way of assisting the Timorese community.[1] By the late 1970s,[2] ACFOA and some of its member agencies had become involved in helping the Timorese circumvent the legal and bureaucratic difficulties associated with bringing out their relatives from Portugal or Timor.

In the meantime, the voluntary agencies continued to press the government for the return of the ICRC to East Timor. Significantly, the Fraser government effectively dropped this demand from its Four-Point policy when, in October 1976, it gave financial aid to the Indonesian Red Cross (IRC). In July 1979, however, ACFOA reported that the IRC -- the only organization

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1 For an examination of attempts to reunite Timorese families between 1975-1979 see Walsh, P., "Timorese Family Reunions: Politics before People", Development Dossier, No.1, pp.26-30.

2 ACFOA continued to be vocal in its criticism of Australia's military aid and in its submission to the Harries Committee (on Australia's relations with the Third World, November 1978), it included a large section on such aid and continued to argue that it be suspended until Indonesia ceased its operations in East Timor. ACFOA were also critical of government policy in its response to the Fraser government's Green Paper on 'Immigration Policies and Australia's Population' issued earlier in 1978. The Council described as 'quite inhumane and inexcusable' Australia's treatment of Timorese refugees, and that the then Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Michael Mackellar, had reneged on earlier statements regarding the acceptance of refugees (see East Timor Report No.1, CIET, Manuka, January 1978).
Individuals too played pivotal roles. The CAA's David Scott, for instance, was one of the last Australians to leave East Timor and on his return, levelled strong criticisms at the Australian and Indonesian roles in events in East Timor. By January 1976 he was in New York assisting Ramos Horta in his approach to the UN Security Council to force an early withdrawal of Indonesian troops from East Timor. In a letter to the Australian written while in New York, Scott recorded the widening interest and concern on the part of members of the UN, including China and Russia, and noted Indonesia's worsening international image -- arising not only from its actions in East Timor but also its record in relation to political prisoners. See the Australian, 17 May 1976 and Scott's letters to The Canberra Times (3 December 1976) and the Age (19 November 1976), in which he levelled criticism at B.A. Santamaria and Australia's 'continued complicity' in developments in East Timor.

permitted by Indonesia to channel overseas aid[1] -- was ineffective, and that such aid was being misappropriated.[2] Late in 1979, the Indonesian Government moderated its hard-line policy and permitted the ICRC and the Catholic Relief Services of the United States (CRS) to begin work in East Timor.

Up until the UDT coup of 6 August 1975, the majority of ACFOA member agencies had not taken a political stand in relation to developments in East Timor. However, the nature of ACFOA's involvement began to change with the events surrounding the coup and its aftermath, and the public position it adopted at its Annual Council meeting on 23 August 1975 marked a significant departure from its traditional views. The resolutions that were adopted and the strategy that was employed to pressure the Australian Government were supported by everyone present, except the Australian Red Cross which, in an indication of the uneasiness over such a direction, subsequently withdrew from ACFOA in protest.[3]

The impact of its campaign, however, was significant and had a bearing on the climate of relations between Australia and Indonesia. Moreover, while a number of the voluntary agencies played a central role in it, other sources of support were very much in evidence, particularly on the part of trade unions and the churches,[4] as well as the press.[5] In addition, considerable parliamentary debate was engendered, primarily through the activities of Fry, Uren, Bonner and, later, Hodgman. All shared the views of ACFOA and all were particularly critical of their own political parties.

The contribution which the voluntary organizations made was significant because it sustained public interest in the East Timor issue (and continued in its attempts to do so by monitoring

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1 A small programme was also being run by the local Catholic church.

2 Aid and East Timor, Australian Council for Overseas Aid, July 1979. See also the Age, 2 August 1979.

3 Eldridge, P.J., "Indonesia and Australia", p.154.

4 See below.

5 See Chapter Eight.

developments in the territory)[1], even in the face of a declining interest and activities on the part of the solidarity groups. While this continued activity met with limited success -- the most notable advance being the opening up of East Timor to the ICRC -- there were adverse consequences, not least those related to the damage done to ACFOA's standing with Indonesia.[2] ACFOA, and the solidarity groups, were criticized by the government and by some supporters of Indonesia's actions in the territory for encouraging the East Timorese to continue in a fight that they had no hope of winning. However, it could be argued that ACFOA's actions in this campaign, while not falling strictly within the guidelines of an aid organization, were a logical outcome of its earlier activist work in East Timor.[3]

3. NGOs

The Trade Union and Church Movements

Although the Australian trade union movement displayed limited public concern over Indonesian issues between 1966 and 1975,[4] it emerged as an important component of dissenting opinion on East Timor. At the forefront were the maritime unions which had been drawn to the East Timorese cause through the activities of Fretilin members who had held waterfront rallies. As early as March 1975, the trade unions had mounted a delegation[5] with the Australian Union of Students (AUS) to visit East Timor to survey developments and conditions there. The group was in the territory at the same

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1 See, for example, ACFOA's East Timor Report, No.6, March 1984.

2 Eldridge, P.J., "Indonesia and Australia", p.154.

3 Hill, H., "The NGOs and East Timor", p.13.

4 See Chapter Six.

5 The delegation included Jill Jolliffe (AUS), J. Birch (CSIRO physicist and an active member of CAA), K. Wilson (Secretary of the Newcastle Trades Hall Council), W. Williams (aboriginal Legal Rights field officer from South Australia), T. Rowse (sociology tutor from Flinders University) and M. Aarons (ABC journalist).

time as the Labor Party delegation and they travelled extensively.[1] On its return the group called on the Australian Government to reopen Australia's consulate in Dili, and sought direct Australian aid for the territory as well as the establishment of an Australian-Timorese Friendship Society.[2]

While this failed to move the Australian Government, union interest was sustained by mounting information about Indonesian military activities in the territory. This finally prompted the unions to impose bans on Indonesian ships in Australian ports, just as, a generation before, the union movement had banned Dutch ships in support of Indonesian independence.[3] The first such action took place in Darwin on 21 October 1975, when the local branch of the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF) imposed a ban on the Modensatu.[4] While this was in protest against Indonesian attacks on border towns in East Timor, bans imposed the following day on the Tamboura, by Melbourne tug crews,[5] were in response to the deaths of the five Australian journalists.[6]

This action angered the Indonesians, in particular Foreign Minister Malik, who called on the unions to end their boycotts and warned, 'we praised Australian Labor in backing Indonesia's independence struggle during the revolution and now they should not be so easily influenced by incorrect information which can affect

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1 Union delegates addressed trade union meetings in the territory and undertook to: nurture the trade union movement in East Timor through a programme of reciprocal visits between the Australian and East Timor union movements; support their struggle for independence, and to internationalize their cause in the trade union arena; and to examine issues of wages, social service matters and skilled training.

2 The Australian, 24 March 1975. See also Roulston, J., "Indonesia warned against interference in Timor" (A Special Report), AMWU Monthly Journal, July 1975.

3 For an account of this see Viviani, N., "Australian Attitudes and Policies", pp.121-123.

4 The Tribune ("Wharfies, Seamen, Ban Indonesian Ships"), 29 October 1975.

5 Members of the Seamen's Union.

6 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.219.

the good relations they have created'.[1] However, the unions were not deterred and a week later in Sydney, the Garsa II (of the State Shipping Line, Jakarta Lloyd) had a ban placed on it by the Sydney Branch of the WWF in protest against Indonesia's military support of the UDT and Apodeti.[2] Further Indonesian protestations, including a threat to cease Indonesian civil shipping operations to Australia and a call on the Australian Government to intervene, failed to discourage the unions' activities. In protest against Indonesia's military occupation of the small administrative town of Atabai, a meeting of national maritime unions in Sydney late in November resolved to impose bans on all Indonesian-registered ships in Australia as well as any ship carrying war materials to Indonesia.

The invasion of East Timor saw this activity intensify. By early 1976,[3] the national WWF and the Transport and Postal Workers Unions were at the forefront of action taken in protest against Indonesia's military activities in East Timor, with over forty unions joining to raise funds to purchase a relief ship to go to the war-stricken territory. Although the attempt was unsuccessful,

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1 The Age, 27 October 1975.

2 The Age, 30 October 1975. In Adelaide, a boycott was also imposed on the Gunung Kerintji by the local maritime unions.

3 In early 1976, the CIET held a 'Conference for an Independent East Timor'. Early differences centred on whether the campaign should aim at gaining maximum support for the DRET; seek much wider union bans on Indonesia; force the federal government to break all ties with Indonesia; organize aid in the form of food and medical supplies for DRET or whether attention should be given to how the struggle of the East Timor people fitted into 'the general struggle for independence and for social change'. It was resolved that the immediate task was to provide political and practical support for DRET. Accordingly, the Conference decided to build public awareness of the true situation in Timor and develop a mass movement as quickly as possible in support of DRET, 'paying particular attention to the involvement of the trade unions'. In this regard, it was felt that 'such policies and actions (including that of the ACTU) appear to fall short of what most rank and file would desire and certainly far short of what is required'. The Conference also resolved to organize a National Day of Protest on 18 March 1976, leading to a National Conference on 20 May 1976. (Conference of an Independent East Timor, Report, John Diggins and Wally Stubbings, undated, QT&LC, South Brisbane).

it brought a degree of unity to a disparate grouping of Australians who were intent on assisting the East Timorese. The group now included the unions, the Roman Catholic Bishops and ACFOA, all of which were at the centre of the relief ship attempts.[1]

While links between the churches and the trade unions had earlier been forged through mutual concern about Indonesia's political prisoners,[2] the churches also undertook to initiate their own campaign of protest over developments in East Timor. An examination of the ACC's Working Documents[3] revealed that, as early as September 1975, the Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, had been called on by the ACC to press for UN assistance for Portuguese decolonization efforts. In the following months this pressure continued and, after the Indonesian invasion, concern was expressed not only over Indonesia's actions but also at the lack of opportunity to assist refugees caught up in the fighting.[4]

In a series of resolutions during its 28th General Meeting in July 1976, the ACC formally called:

> on the Federal Government to take action consistent with its publicly stated position on East Timor, namely to press for the withdrawal of Indonesian troops and facilitate United Nations supervision of an act of self-determination ... and further to provide humanitarian relief if necessary by Australian Government transport for the people of East Timor regardless of their political allegiance.[5]

Moreover, the Council resolved that the heads of the member churches be requested to bring the issue to the attention of their

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1 "Back the Union Ship to Break Indonesian Relief Blockage", Pamphlet, Authorized by the Trade Union Peace and Solidarity Committee, East Timor Newsletter, 1/76.

2 See Chapter Six.

3 A copy of a summary of some of the works carried out by or through the council, its divisions and working groups in recent years is held by the writer.

4 Five Anglican Bishops sent a telegram to the Prime Minister, Fraser, asking the government to take action on the evacuation of these refugees and the setting up of a neutral zone. The Australian, 31 December 1975.

5 Australian Council of Churches, Minutes, 28th General Meeting, Brisbane, 9-13 July 1976, Resolution 39, p.21.

local MPs;[1] that they be kept abreast of developments in East Timor by the Division of World Christian Action;[2] that the Council of Churches in Indonesia be informed of the ACCs willingness to provide relief and aid funds for the East Timorese people; and that they be asked how this urgent task could be achieved.[3]

In the meantime, in February 1976, the Executive of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) endorsed the recommendations made by the maritime and waterfront unions, banning any handling or working of Indonesian registered vessels and placing a ban on the loading of any military supplies destined for Indonesia. In addition, it called on the Fraser government to cease the training of Indonesian Armed Forces personnel until the East Timor issue was resolved.[4]

Throughout the next two years, the churches and trade union movements continued to work for a resolution to the East Timor problem. The Roman Catholic Bishops continued to lobby the Australian and Indonesian Governments for the safe passage of relief ships and workers going to East Timor[5] and the annual assembly of the Presbyterian Church voted unanimously to call on the World Council of Churches to support diplomatic moves to allow self-determination in East Timor. However, the Victorian Branch of the Presbyterian Church went further in backing the right of the East Timorese to independence from Indonesia. It accused Indonesia of 'butchery' in the killing of over 60 000 East Timorese in the wake of the December invasion, and levelled strong criticism at the Australian Government for failing to take a stand against Indonesia, warning that such a failure marked a watershed in Australia's future relations with Asia.[6]

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1 Ibid., Resolution 40, p.21.

2 Australian Council of Churches, Minutes, 28th General Meeting, Brisbane, 9-13 July 1976, Resolution 41, p.21.

3 Ibid., Resolution 43, p.21.

4 Noted in Australian Council of Trade Unions, Executive Report... The Australian Congress of Trade Unions, Sydney 12-16 September 1977, p.8.

5 The Age, 17 May 1976.

6 The Age, 13 October 1976.

At the ACTU Congress of 1977, the Australian Building Construction Employees and Builders Labourers' Federation saw Indonesia's activities in East Timor as blatant acts of aggression,[1] while the Firemen and Deckhands' Union of NSW[2] condemned Indonesia's occupation of the territory as a continuing denial of human rights. Such appeals were supported in full by the Trade Union Congress which resolved to maintain its bans on Indonesian shipping.[3] Similar concerns were expressed and urgent resolutions adopted by the ACC Executive Committee in Adelaide at the 29th General Meeting in June 1978, although it placed greater stress on the need to take whatever steps were necessary to assist East Timorese refugees, including facilitating family reunions and resettlement in Australia.[4]

By 1980, the ACC expressed its dismay at the continuing failure to reunite Timorese families, many of whom had been separated for five years.[5] Indonesia's reluctance to allow departures from Timor -- due to their concern that new arrivals would talk about their experiences following the Indonesian invasion, as well as engaging in anti-Indonesian political activity -- had retarded the family reunion programme. As agreed upon by

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1 ACTU, Agenda Paper ... The Australian Congress of Trade Unions, 1977, Resolution 88, pp.32-33. In early 1976, the Builder's Workers Industrial Union lobbied the T&LC (Brisbane) to hold a public reception on Wednesday 10 March 1976 to enable trade union officials to meet two representatives of DRET -- Arango and Silva (The Democratic Republic of East Timor had been proclaimed on 28 November by Xavier do Amaral) -- as part of its drive for international acceptance. The union's secretary (J.A. Sherrington) considered 'Receptions have been put on for less important people', and indicated while it was prepared to underwrite the costs involved, it would also approach other unions, including the AMIEU, WWF, SUA and the Ships Painters and Dockers Union (Correspondence dated 1 March 1976 to F. Whitby, General Secretary of the T&LC, Brisbane).

2 Ibid., Resolution 89, p.33.

3 Ibid. See also Executive decision of May 1977, in ACTU, Executive Report, 1977, p.21.

4 ACC, Minutes, 29th General Meeting, Adelaide, 1978, Resolution 74, p.21.

5 ACC, Minutes, 30th General Meeting, Sydney, 1980, Resolution 64, p.21.

Fraser and Suharto at their October 1976 meeting in Jakarta, an 'in principle' agreement on reunions was announced in March 1977. Of the 625 people settled on in July 1978 for reunion in Australia, less than half had arrived in Australia two years later. Predictably, the Australian Government's responses to Indonesia's intransigence over family reunions were governed above all by foreign policy considerations related principally to sustaining the Australian-Indonesian relationship.[1]

Curiously, the trade union movement did not address this particular aspect of the East Timor situation.[2] Just as surprising, the ACC did not pursue its campaign through its established contacts with the Indonesian Council of Churches (ICC). The Australia-Indonesia Mission Group (AIMG) met in Jakarta in March 1980 and it was only then that special attention was given to the possibility of a church team visiting East Timor.[3] However, it was not until 1981, at the fifth meeting of the AIMG in Newcastle (Australia), that the issue of reunion was raised.[4]

Whether these developments reflected flaws in their respective campaigns, an ICC adherence to the Indonesian Government's policy line or a waning of interest in the face of the Australian Government's gradual but firm and eventual movement toward accommodation with Indonesia, the East Timor issue had been receding from prominence in the public arena. Although the support which had been coming from sections of the trade union movement was substantial, by late 1977, some of the trade union bans that had been in place since the closing months of 1975 had been lifted and others were in danger of being lifted.[5] Moreover, while there was

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1 See, for example, protracted statement by Peacock in the House of Representatives, CPD, H.R., Vol.117, p.737-738, 6 March 1980, and Ibid., p.1106, 25 March 1980.

2 An examination of ACTU Agendas and Minutes between 1975 and 1980 failed to reveal any reference to East Timor refugees or family reunion.

3 See Resolution 65, ACC, Minutes, Sydney, July 1980, p.21.

4 ACC, Working Documents, Vol.1, 31st General Meeting, Brisbane, 1982, p.1/03.

5 Within months of imposing a ban in February 1976, on mail from Australia to Indonesia, the Amalgamated Postal and Telecommunications Union (APTU) lifted it, after

enthusiastic support on the wharves from rank and file workers during the maritime union bans on Indonesian flagships, support at the federal level was weak and the bans that were placed were too narrow to be effective.[1] The maritime unions, too, were unsuccessful in applying trade embargo, as the bulk of important trade to Indonesia was not handled by Indonesian flagships but by Dutch and Scandinavian ships. In a reflection of these frustrations at the time, one radical newspaper editorialized:

> the ACTU has so far failed to ban all trade, which is the most effective weapon. There are also disturbing reports that some sort of bans aren't as solid as they could be. The answer here lies with every unionist. We can't afford to wait for the union leadership to act.[2]

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representations were made from wives of Australian businessmen and Embassy staff in Jakarta. In late 1975, the Canberra Trades and Labour Council (whose members had earlier held talks with Ramos Horta) placed a black ban on the Indonesian Embassy and the homes of military and air attaches. These bans were maintained through a full-time picket line made up of members of the Canberra Branches of the CIET and AETA. The bans lapsed at the end of the summer holidays because, as the membership consisted mainly of students and teachers, the schools and tertiary institutions had reopened. The picket was unable to continue without stronger assistance from the unions. See The Canberra Times, 19 December 1975 and the Tribune, 21 July 1976.

[1] One example related to the shipment of copper telecommunications wire which in early 1976 came into an Australian port on a non-Indonesian flagship bound for Jakarta. Militant waterside workers delayed the ship's departure for a considerable period of time but were forced to allow it to leave because it did not come within the terms of the ban, and the federal level would not support their on-the-job decision to delay it. The Tribune, 21 March 1976. See also Hill,H., The Timor Story, p.18 and footnote 122 for other examples.

[2] The Battler (International Socialists), 6 March 1976. This reticence to act was evident on the part of the Trades and Labor Council in Brisbane. An examination of their East Timor files indicated that approaches from a variety of sources for assistance in the East Timor cause were often fended off. For example, on 28 June 1977, Whitby (The General Secretary of the T&LC) received an approach from D. Larkin of the Queensland Branch of the A-ET Association requesting the T&LC to send a delegation to the forthcoming National East Timor Activities Consultations (to be held in Melbourne on 23-24 July). Set up essentially as a response to the acute situation in East Timor at the time, one item of the talks was 'to look specifically at trade union activities in relation to East Timor'. Whitby was not forthcoming with assistance. While, he said that the T&LC

In a broader appraisal of the solidarity groups, generally, and their inability to realize their potential as an Australia-wide lobby group, Jill Jolliffe was particularly critical of the trade union movement. Jolliffe correctly considered that the movement's East Timor activities were relatively minor, with few in its rank and file membership playing an active role in the solidarity groups.[1]

Division and reticence was also evident within the church movement, both domestically and internationally. On one level, ideological considerations had created a schism in the Catholic Church. While senior figures sympathized with the concerns of their colleagues in Timor over the perceived left-winged Fretilin -- most notably the conservative Bishop, Ribario -- Catholic priests like fathers Raper[2] and Walsh[3] were taking a deep interest in the plight of the East Timorese. Similarly, a concern that longstanding Indonesian contacts and, more notably, Indonesia-based projects not be jeopardized, restrained the Protestant churches in Australia from accommodating pleas from the Christian

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'supports the holding of the consultations, it cannot see its way clear to financing representation [although] ... we would appreciate being kept posted on developments'. Approaches were made also from Senator Bernie Kilgariff who called for an 'indication of your attitude towards extending the hand of friendship to Timorese refugees in Portugal and Timor who wish to come to Australia' (Cable: 1830hrs, 2 December 1976, Ref. BRA 475 = ABG 180 = SDN A253 =). Peg Penberthy, Secretary of the AETA also made approaches to the T&LC, on one occasion calling for funds to sponsor a combined AETA/CIET Rally at King George's Square, Brisbane on 16 October 1976 at which 'messages would be read by Tom Uren, Ken Fry and other leaders' in commemoration of the deaths of the five Australian journalists. The union sent twenty dollars. Penberthy was still active into 1977, writing to the T&LC asking it to publicize talks to be given by Senator Bonner (at the Catholic Education Centre in Brisbane on 25 February 1977) and James Dunn, Palmos Rooms of the Greek Progressive League, 84 Vulture St, West End on 23 June 1977). The latter activity was an attempt to appeal to a 'cross-section of the community'.

1 See arguments put by Jolliffe, J., "Timor: A Year of Struggle", Arena, Nos.42-43, 1976.

2 A Jesuit priest from the Asian Bureau of Australia, and a member of the ACFOA 'Task Force'.

3 A Sacred Heart priest and a member of Action for World Development.

community in East Timor.[1] On another level, perceived Australian hostility toward Indonesia gave rise to conflict between the Australian and Indonesian delegations at the WCC Conference in Nairobi. This conflict failed to be resolved at a succeeding conference in Jakarta a year later, which is not surprising in view of the pro-Indonesian government position adopted by the Indonesian Council of Churches.[2]

. AIBCC

While world recession and an unsettled domestic political situation in Indonesia had, by the mid-1970s, created a difficult climate for the conduct and further nurturing of Australia-Indonesia business interests, by 1975, private business initiatives in establishing commercial and industrial links with Indonesia had increased significantly. With the Australian Government giving 'a high political priority ... to promoting a favourable environment for Australian trade and investment in Indonesia',[3] over 150 individuals and companies were now members of the AIBCC.[4] Since then, however, developments in Indonesia -- particularly the emergence of economic nationalism[5] -- has seen Australian investment slow down dramatically. Nevertheless, optimism about Indonesia's long-term prospects remained -- an attitude better understood by viewing the Australia-Indonesia nexus in the context of the wider regional and global economic dimensions.[6]

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1 Also, some of Indonesia's senior military figures were Christians (including General Murdani) and had strong and enduring links with the WCC.

2 Eldridge, P., Indonesia and Australia, pp.133-134.

3 Ibid., p.13.

4 For a detailed examination of the AIBCC and Australian business links with the government in Indonesia see "Australian business links with the military junta of Indonesia: a sample study", Timor News, Trades Hall Research Centre for Newcastle CIET, Newcastle, June-July 1977 (Special Issue).

5 See Chapter One.

6 Eldridge, P., Indonesia and Australia, p.119. Eldridge stresses the Asia-Pacific region, and the Australia-Indonesia-Japan nexus in particular.

It was against this background that, on 15 October 1976, the AIBCC convened a meeting in Canberra to consider ways of turning the tide of public opposition to (and of pressing the Australian government to formally recognize) East Timor's integration into the Indonesian Republic. Present at this meeting were representatives of some of Australia's largest companies, together with senior-level public servants, principally from the Departments of Overseas Trade and Foreign Affairs. Officials from the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra, as well as Australian MPs also attended the meeting, which was held behind closed doors, and it was the Indonesian Government that, within a week, revealed details of its proceedings. On 21 October, Indonesian officials circulated copies of cables received from the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra to journalists in Jakarta, summarizing the substance and outcome of the talks.[1]

Reports of these cables were quickly picked up by papers in Australia. The Age quoted the new President of the AIBCC and Deputy General Manager of the major sugar company CSR, Mr Kelman as stating that the AIBCC had made 'strong representations' to the Australian Government to give 'tacit' recognition of Indonesia's integration of the territory of East Timor. Moreover, it was indicated that he had said that East Timor was no longer an issue and that the Australian business community was unhappy with the government's position on the issue. Kelman also warned that further tension over East Timor could do long-term damage to Australia's business, trade and strategic interests.[2]

As far as public records reveal, this had been the second attempt by the AIBCC to influence government policy over the East Timor issue. In October 1975, Kelman had despatched a cable, on behalf of the member-companies of the Committee, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Willesee, with copies to Prime Minister Whitlam[3] and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for

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1 CSR (Sydney), of which Kelman was Deputy General Manager, raised this leaking with Ian Porteous of the AIBCC in Canberra in a telex (No. CSR AA20285) dated 22 October 1976 (in possession of the writer).

2 The Age, 23 October 1976.

3 The contents of the cable were contained in a letter from the Secretary-General (W.J. Henderson), in which he also

Overseas Trade, Frank Crean.[1] In a letter of thanks to Willesee's written response of 17 October 1975 -- in which the Foreign Minister gave his 'assurance that the Australia/Indonesia relationship will be one of the foremost factors in ... the formulation of Australia's policy towards the Portuguese Timor problem'[2] -- Kelman took the opportunity to again press the government. On this occasion, however, he directed attention at:

> reports that we are receiving from Asia ... that there is a widespread misunderstanding of the official position that the Australian Government is taking with regard to the Timor problem.

In what was a clear indication of the AIBCC's concern about the confusion that divisions within the Australian Government were creating in Indonesia, he stressed:

> In the interests of Australia's long-term relationship with Indonesia we believe that it is important for the Australian Government to remove some of the apparent ambiguities from its present policy towards East Timor. In its discussions with Indonesian officials we believe that the Government should also seek to put into proper perspective the activities of certain minority groups in Australia.[3]

In the meantime, with members of the AIBCC expressing a general concern about the possible impact of the issue on Australia's industrial and commercial links with Indonesia, Kelman produced a paper for circulation to all AIBCC members. Against a background of developments taking place in East Timor, the paper outlined:

> the Timor problem as we see it, the position that the AIBCC has adopted with regard to this issue and our efforts to exert a moderating influence in order to preserve the excellent relationship that we currently enjoy with Indonesia.[4]

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indicated, 'I trust, Prime Minister, that the point of view which we have expressed is consistent with your own approach'. Letter to the Hon. E.G. Whitlam QC, MP Prime Minister, dated 10 October 1975. From AIBCC file no. IA-1201/168. (Copy of letter with the writer).

1 Since 14 July 1975 (the Second Whitlam Ministry).

2 This is a passage in a letter from Kelman to the Foreign Minister dated 10 November 1975 (copy with the writer), in which Kelman thanks Willesee for such an assurance.

3 Ibid.

4 Covering letter signed by Kelman and entitled 'The Problems in East Timor', dated 11 November 1975 (copy with the

While it did not wish to become publicly involved in political affairs -- because of the investment and commercial links between the two countries represented by the AIBCC -- it considered that it had 'an obligation to make known privately to the Australian Government the views and concerns of its members'. In this regard, although it considered a political settlement involving Portugal, Indonesia and representatives from East Timor most likely to take place (it did not rule out completely any kind of military intervention by Indonesia) the AIBCC were particularly concerned by the anti-Indonesian activity of what it considered were 'minority groups' within Australia. Further, this concern extended to a failure on the part of the Australian Government to oppose them. Pointedly, the AIBCC argued that this:

> is being seen in Indonesia and Asia generally as indicating tacit approval, or at least non-disapproval, by Australia of the Fretilin cause.

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writer). The paper itself noted developments in Portuguese Timor following the coup in Portugal, and the civil war in the territory following the UDT coup. In particular, it noted Indonesian military assistance to the UDT/Apodeti forces in their fight against Fretilin (in this context it considered the 12-point memorandum of understanding arising from the Rome talks would be seen by Fretilin as a 'Portuguese sellout' and as generally 'strengthening the likelihood of an ultimate Indonesian takeover of East Timor' - p.2.).

The two major issues for the AIBCC centred on what East Timor's future status should be and how it could be achieved. It saw Australia's position as having three primary concerns: (1) stability within the Southeast Asian region; (2) continuation of good relations with Indonesia; and (3) support of the principles of other States (pp.5-6).

The paper noted anti-Indonesian demonstrations in Australia, the trade union movement's actions against Indonesia and reports of private Australian military support for Fretilin and Indonesia's 'significant concern' at such a development. It also noted Indonesia's attempts to press the Australian Government to intervene in the strikes mounted by the waterside worker's union, and the Australian Government's reticence to do anything about them. Finally, the paper identified Indonesia's three major concerns: East Timor could (1) be used as a base by a communist government; (2) be used as a refuge and base by Indonesian and other Asian dissidents; (3) give encouragement to secessionist movements in Sulawesi, the Moluccas and West Irian. Finally, the report indicated that the 'AIBCC has already made representations to the Australian Government and will continue to do so as and when necessary, until the crisis in East Timor is satisfactorily resolved' (p.9). Background Paper, "The Problem in East Timor", AIBCC, 6 November 1975.

It was important that ambiguities not only be removed from government policy, but also that the activities of the dissident groups be put into perspective by the Australian Government, while not lending its support to any inflammatory statements that could have a permanently damaging effect on the relationship.[1]

Many of these sentiments formed the basis for discussions at the AIBCC meeting which was held in October 1976. On that occasion it directed its comments to the new Fraser government, which it considered, like the Whitlam administration, did not fully appreciate that 'the tensions generated by the East Timor issue ... could do long-term damage to Australian business and other interests in Indonesia...'[2]. Moreover, in an indication of its limited success in lobbying either governments, Kelman went on:

> let us learn from the mistakes of East Timor -- for the issue contains a number of important lessons for us. It has highlighted the need for much closer liaison between business and government and other interested parties in responding to developments overseas. Only in this way will the government be quite sure that its policy contains the necessary strands of realism needed to make implementation of its policy most effective.

Further, the AIBCC president considered that Australian governments generally needed to account for the position and interests of Australian business interests overseas, which were an important extension of Australia's domestic economy. And, in a sharp warning to the Fraser government, Kelman urged it 'to ponder carefully these lessons in the future formulation and implementation of its foreign policy'.[3]

While such statements received immediate and considerable coverage in the Australian press, with exposure of the meeting undoubtedly intended to bring further pressure on the Fraser government, it failed to do so, with those involved quickly closing

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1 Ibid., p.9.

2 Kelman, Address (to AIBCC luncheon), 15 October 1976 (AIBCC File No.1A401; copy with the writer), p.2.

3 Ibid. It could also be assumed that the pressure on Fraser continued to be applied by Reid who, while no longer President of the AIBCC, was still active in Australia-Indonesia business ventures, and who was in Jakarta at the time of the Prime Minister's visit to Indonesia during the same month. Fraser also officially opened a new James Hardie factory near Jakarta (Reid was Chairman of Hardie Asbestos Ltd.).

ranks: Kelman refused to comment, most of the commercial media lapsed into silence and CSR disowned its Deputy General Manager, denying his statements reflected the company's views.[1]

Nevertheless, the deeper reality of the activities of the AIBCC related strongly to the wider regional and global economic nexus emphasized by Eldridge,[2] and it was the interests represented in such a nexus that drove its campaign of lobbying of both the Whitlam and Fraser governments. In essence, the AIBCC had one principal objective -- to bring about an environment that would continue to sustain Australia's economic ties with Indonesia. Under normal circumstances these links were:

> assured by trade -- by direct investment, by a bilateral integration in which Australia's semi-processed materials are manufactured into finished products in Indonesia and by grants of aid ... aimed at establishing the infrastructure necessary for foreign firms in Indonesia.[3]

. Returned Services League (RSL)

In the mid-1970s, the RSL continued to see Indonesia as having a particularly strong role in Western strategic interests. On the wider canvas, it considered that detente had failed to produce an environment of understanding and cooperation between the super powers or an attendant reduction in world tension. Integral here was the Soviet Union's pursuit of 'its ultimate aim of world communism'[4] Of particular concern to the RSL were the Soviet activities in the Indian Ocean and it considered that the achievement of closer ties with the ASEAN States -- in particular military cooperation -- was a major priority for Australian policies if this threat was to be overcome.

By the end of the decade, the RSL was expressing major concern about what it considered had been a period of 'serious deterioration in the international situation, especially in

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1 Tribune, 27 October 1976.

2 See above.

3 Sharp, N., "Timor: Indonesia Sows the Land", Arena, No.41, 1976, p.15.

4 RSL, 61st Annual Report, 1976, p.21. The RSL's Defence Paper (by Major-General D. Vincent) was reproduced in Pacific Defence Reporter, October 1977, pp.22-28.

Australia's own area of strategic interest'.[1] Now, more than at any time since the height of the Vietnam War, with the Soviet Union ensconced in Indo-China through its military alliance with Vietnam, the RSL saw the necessity for developing closer economic, political and, in particular, defence cooperation with the ASEAN States if the independence of the region was to be preserved.[2]

A fundamental ingredient to the success of such a strategy, however, was a friendly Indonesia. While the RSL considered Indonesia should 'be in no doubt that [Australia's] ... position and military posture are factors to be respected', it nevertheless saw her as being essential to Australia's security. In this context, the RSL was extremely critical of the marked deterioration in the relationship, which it described as 'inept', and placed the blame with the Australian Government and the Australian media. In a view broadly similar to that expressed by the AIBCC, the RSL argued:

> The media ... does not show any outstanding sense of measured responsibility in this matter equating to the national self-interest; for example, its treatment of the Timor affair, which did nothing to improve our relations ... or take us one step further forward in ensuring the security of the nation. To this end, Government itself must bear some responsibility in that it seems unable to communicate its objectives ... related to the safety and security of its own people.[3]

While the RSL had generally supported government policy towards Indonesia up until this time, it was now at the forefront of public pressure on the Fraser administration to steady the relationship. Yet, in relation to attitudes towards Indonesia, the ambiguities that were evident in RSL attitudes during the earlier period still remained,[4] paralleling noticeable divisions within the RSL

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1 RSL, 65th Annual Report, 1980, p.13.

2 Ibid., pp.14-15.

3 RSL, 64th Annual Report, 1979, p.17.

4 In 1978, for example, the RSL considered one of the major factors which should govern the development of Australia's defence policy was an Indonesia which was 'showing itself to be increasingly insensitive to the attitudes of its neighbours and appears to aspire to long-term predominance in South-East Asia' (RSL, 63rd Annual Report, 1978, p.18).

movement.[1]

On the whole, however, as a forceful advocate of a strong Indonesia, the RSL displayed little sympathy for the plight of the East Timor people. While sentiments of the role that the East Timorese had played in Australia's Second World War campaign were strong in the RSL, with former commandos even visiting the territory during 1974-1975, it did not publicly support East Timor's right to self-determination. In fact, the organization was quick to focus on the political credentials of Fretilin which it saw as moving decidedly to the left.[2] In view of the RSL's historical disposition towards communism, it seemed inevitable that this still influential lobby group would call for, and approve of, swift action to contain developments in the former Portuguese colony.

The RSL and the AIBCC were the most prominent groups advocating the maintenance of Australia/Indonesia relations, over and above any concern for East Timor's right to self-determination. While they shared this common attitude, it was based on two different but interlocking premises, which were considered fundamental in any calculations concerning the substance and course of the relationship. These considerations derived as much from features of Indonesian political life as from its geographic proximity to Australia. First, Australian policy makers needed to frame policies in terms of the dynamics of a regional system of interlocking, economic-political alignments. Second, within this broad framework of policy, a realistic understanding of Indonesia's potential to be an ally or an enemy was fundamental. Such a view, which was based on a continuing fear that Indonesia may once again

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1 At the 65th Annual Congress, for example, the South Australian delegation put a motion that the RSL 'oppose any further aid of a military nature to Indonesia'. The motion was lost. RSL National Congress, Official Minutes, RSL National Headquarters, Canberra, September 1980, p.51.

2 The writer was told by James Dunn that senior officials of the RSL were called to a dinner given by the Indonesian Ambassador to Australia in mid-1975 during which they were given a briefing on the situation in East Timor. The Indonesians had identified the emergence of communist elements in the Timorese nationalist movement and told of the implications of such a development for regional security.

display the expansionist and aggressively nationalistic foreign policy tendencies that marked the final years of Sukarno's rule, was also prevalent amongst a number of prominent individuals.

4. Prominent Individuals

While well-informed observers were generally far less alarmist than the ill-informed about the potential of such dangers from Asia generally, few of the former have had many illusions that, since the end of the Second World War, Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, was a region of potentially alarming instability which would always present a genuine threat to Australia's security interests.

One who stood out here was B.A. Santamaria[1] who, with other conservative commentators -- including the then Queensland Premier Joh Bjelke-Peterson, Dennis Warner and Professor Arndt -- gave strong support to Indonesia's actions in East Timor. Santamaria was a powerful and influential advocate of the view that Indonesia's strategic importance to Australia, and indeed of ASEAN, was crucial. Thus, while he essentially saw the Timor issue in security terms, a strong ideological element drove much of his criticism of Australian governments throughout the 1974-1980 period. A person whose contribution to the Australian discussion of interests and politics was marked by a 'most starkly Hobbesian view of things',[2] Santamaria's approach was also conditioned by a perception of what he considered was a history of weaknesses in Australian foreign and defence policies that began with the Menzies government and with issues such as West New Guinea.[3]

Santamaria was under no illusion that Indonesia's acquisition of East Timor was anything other than a takeover by a military

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1 B. A. Santamaria, the intellectual founder of the Democratic Labor Party, has been a leading official of the National Civic Council for over thirty years, and holds a conservative (Nationalist and strongly anti-Communist) Catholic point of view on international issues.

2 Harries, Owen, "Santamaria and Foreign Policy", Quadrant, July 1975, p.21.

3 Santamaria, B.A., "The Timor Crisis", News Weekly, 3 September 1975, p.3. See also Viviani's examination of Santamaria's views during that period in her "Australian Attitudes and Politics Towards Indonesia", pp.134-135.

power, or that the East Timorese were given any more meaningful 'act of free choice' than the people of West New Guinea. However, there were limits to Australia's influence in Jakarta and, if it were willing, its ability to act. This, according to Santamaria, was underlined by two contradictory calculations. On the one hand:

> Nothing must be done to incur the disapproval of Peking or Moscow - or the Communist-lining faction of the ALP in the trade unions. On the other hand, there must be no confrontation with the vigorously anti-communist rulers in Jakarta.[1]

From this, Santamaria argued that major complications arose for the region when UDT attempted to establish a regime 'free from the Communist elements bedeviling Portugal and Portuguese Angola', and it was met with resistance by the 'Maoist Fretilin'. Santamaria identified Fretilin as the group that provoked the civil war in East Timor -- a war which had 'ferocious racialist overtones, marked by atrocities of the same kind as those committed in Vietnam and Africa'.[2]

However, such conduct did not affect the attitude of the Australian trade union movement, particularly the left-wing waterside workers. Santamaria was strongly critical of this group which he argued assumed control over Australia's foreign policy by imposing its ban in Darwin on the freighter scheduled to deliver cargo to Timor 'lest it should fall into the hands of the 'reactionary' elements of the UDT'. Santamaria was equally critical of the Australian media, whose call on the Australian Government to pressure Indonesia to allow the East Timorese to decide their own future, he considered was 'sheer hypocritical nonsense' and drawing only 'meaningless gestures' from the government, by way of showing concern without committing itself to anything.[3]

Early in 1976, Santamaria sustained this pressure when he wrote of Foreign Minister Peacock's visit to Jakarta to secure

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1 "The Timor Crisis", News Weekly, 3 September 1975, p.13. Santamaria also wrote that the Australian Government was concerned not to alienate the 'brutal African dictatorships which its 'Third World' policy has sought to cultivate'; further, it lacked the military capability to do anything anyway. Ibid., p.16.

2 Ibid.

3 "The Timor Crisis", News Weekly, 3 September 1975, p.13.

assurances for his four-point policy on Timor:

> Whitlam's Timor policy was an unenviable inheritance for any Foreign Minister ... Nevertheless, it does very little good to keep on presenting the East Timor situation in terms of abstract concepts - 'acceptable standards of international conduct', and so on.[1]

For Santamaria, acceptable standards of international conduct had no relationship either to what he believed to be the facts of the situation in East Timor or to moral judgements (however valid) based on developments as they unfolded on the war-stricken territory. To the NCC leader, the facts were: Indonesia had effectively overcome the Maoist group, Fretilin; cruelty and barbarianism had taken place, but on both sides of those fighting in East Timor; East Timor had been placed in the hands of a pro-Indonesian Government; and Indonesia was prepared to allow the International Red Cross to administer relief assistance to the territory. As far as he understood it, the rest was public relations. In this context, he saw the actions of Fretilin leaders operating freely in Australia as attempts to embroil Australia with Indonesia on the empty plea that Australia should defend the rights of small nations.[2]

While he was critical of Fretilin's activities both in East Timor and Australia, Santamaria was particularly disturbed by the activities of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), its allies and, to his regret, the Christian groups -- AWD and CAA -- which took up the Fretilin cause. Santamaria also levelled criticism at the CIET which he considered had questionable links to the CPA, and the AETA which was based on the development agencies, including CAA. The national moratorium which was organized for 18-20 March 1976, with marches in all capital cities, was seen by Santamaria to be the product of careful organization by this nucleus of left-wing groups, as well as by unions and student organizations under its control. It was designed not only to support Fretilin but to embarrass the Australian Government and weaken its ties with Indonesia.

The Fraser government's response to these developments equally disturbed Santamaria. It was his view that the task facing the government was to establish firm public support for the opposite

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1 The Australian, 30 April 1976.

2 "Australia's Foreign Policy", News Weekly, 10 May 1976.

policy, by informing Australians about Fretilin's spurious make-up, its role in East Timor and about the groups and individuals in Australia who were intent on destroying Australia's relationship with Indonesia. Instead, the Australian Government was pursuing a dual policy:

> On the one hand, [it] kept talking about 'acceptable standards of international conduct' - language that puts the Indonesians in the dark. On the other hand, [it] increased ... economic aid to Indonesia, encouraging the accusation that Australia was squaring off.

Santamaria considered that, inevitably, policies intended to placate both sides would, in the end, create enemies of both.[1]

Santamaria continually stressed that the issue involved two imperatives: a hostile Indonesia would be disastrous to Australia's security interests; and Fretilin's agitation was not directed towards defending the rights of a small state, but was an attempt to impose a 'now-defeated' Marxist faction on East Timor, regardless of its effects on Australia's relationship with Indonesia. Such imperatives required the urgent attention of the Australian Government at a time when it was increasingly clear that the issue was becoming less a campaign for East Timor than one against Indonesia.

In this context, Dunn's allegations of 1977 were simply a renewal of the anti-Indonesian campaign that had, by late 1976, begun to quieten. Santamaria discredited such allegations as 'the result of a kind of joint operation involving Mr Bryant MHR and Mr Jim Dunn', and was particularly scathing in his criticism of Dunn, whom he described as a person whose 'authority is persistently inflated by constant reference to the fact that he was former Consul in East Timor, and is head of the Foreign Affairs Research Group attached to the Parliamentary Library'. Santamaria argued that Dunn's allegations (earlier stories had reported 60 000 to 100 000 Timorese as having been killed by the Indonesian military) needed to be authenticated by a more objective authority. In any event:

> Whatever the subjective sincerity of particular individuals, the ultimate objectives of the present campaign are directed to the defeat of the Indonesians in Timor, a breach between the Australian and Indonesian governments, and the weakening, if not the overthrow, of

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[1] "Timor", News Weekly, 9 February 1977, p.16.

the Suharto government....[1]

In late 1977, Santamaria expressed the view that when the Fraser government came to office it could have been expected that Australia's relationship with Indonesia would have been strengthened rather than weakened. However, he considered that a critical point had been reached as the extreme left-wing campaign against Indonesia, while manipulating the Timor situation, had finally involved eighty federal MPs in a policy that was utterly opposed to Australia's strategic interests. Essentially in this matter, the extreme left was far more effective than the elected government and was determining Australia's attitude towards Indonesia and, more importantly, Indonesia's attitude towards Australia. In such circumstances, the time had come for the government to take the matter in hand before 'the widening gulf becomes unbridgeable'. Two months later, the Australian Government announced de facto recognition of East Timor's integration into Indonesia.

While James Dunn's early involvement in the issue saw him urge the Whitlam government to do something concrete about promoting its stated policies in favour of peaceful self-determination, his investigations into conditions in East Timor saw him become deeply and emotionally involved in the prevailing humanitarian questions.[2] This compelled him to define events in Timor in terms of Indonesia's brutal involvement there and his report of early 1977 brought reality to a situation that was slowly receding from public prominence. These killings reshaped his approach to the East Timor issue and his understanding of the roles of the Australian and Indonesian Governments.

Following a visit to the territory in 1974, Dunn had been impressed by an increase in the level of political awareness since his time there in the early 1960s. In December 1974 he met with Ramos Horta who was in Australia lobbying support for independence and aid. Following the UDT coup in August 1975, Dunn was not only concerned to see a settlement reached, so ending the fighting and

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Dunn did not see himself as motivated by ideological considerations and often expressed this view to the writer. Ironically, when he was Consul in Dili between 1961-1964, James Dunn considered that East Timor's future in all probability lay with Indonesia.

human suffering in the territory, but also an ending of the conditions and general disruptions created by the war which would make it extremely difficult to implement any kind of short- or long-term economic aid programmes. Moreover, he was bitterly convinced that the civil war in Timor had been inspired by Indonesia in order to integrate the territory. Dunn was greatly disturbed by the human suffering and the generally depressed economic and social conditions that would prevail in East Timor.[1]

As a member of the ACFOA team which visited East Timor in mid-October 1975, he was particularly disturbed to find that there had been no contact between the parties to the conflict (Fretilin, UDT and Portugal) and no effort had been made to establish any contact. As far as Dunn was aware, Fretilin had requested negotiations -- on 20 September and 25 October 1975 -- although, on both occasions it appeared that mutually acceptable conditions were never arrived at and the impetus for any contact lost momentum. Whether this was due to incompetence, misunderstanding or conscious design, Foreign Affairs Minister Willesee claimed that the failure to negotiate was due to Fretilin's intransigence.[2] On the other hand, Dunn believed that the Fretilin leadership had been effectively isolated by a combination of skilful Indonesian propaganda and diplomacy and by Portugal's inaction. This, together with the perception that they had been the 'victims of an act of aggression -- a cruel injustice which outside powers were choosing to ignore', saw a hardening of attitudes within the Fretilin leadership.

However, while they may have had success in the military arena, the leadership lacked the wider political and diplomatic perspectives that were necessary to successfully articulate their case on the international stage. With their limited view of the outside world, a fundamental and persistent tenet of Fretilin thought was the belief that boundless enthusiasm and goodwill were sufficient ingredients for success and that it inevitably followed that the world had to see the justice of their cause. This soon gave way, however, under the weight of the realization that progress would not be smooth and support not forthcoming. Such a reality found expression in the failure of the Portuguese-Fretilin

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1 Dunn, J., "The Political Situation in East Timor", Appendix 1, Report on Visit to East Timor, (ACFOA), 1975, pp.16-17.

2 CPD, Senate, S.66, 30 October, p.1610.

negotiations of mid-1975 and it gave rise to a bitter, more self-reliant demeanor on the part of Fretilin's leaders. Moreover, Fretilin's political inexperience was exacerbated by the military conflict, which was imposing strains and tensions on the leadership, and the inevitable possibility of a struggle within Fretilin, over power.

Despite all this, Dunn was of the firm view that, notwithstanding their inexperience, Fretilin's experience as an administrative power towards the end of 1975 had been a compressed learning process. In particular, he thought Fretilin had been surprisingly effective in its skeleton administration of the territory -- the distribution of food had been equitably carried out, the basic services in Dili were functioning more or less normally and the general populace appeared to be quiet and orderly.[1]

5. The Atrocities Debate

In August 1975, stories of widespread killings and atrocities during the civil war began to emerge. In the following six months reports were confirming the details of such stories, with the most damning indictments coming from UDT leader and Deputy Executive of the 'Provincial Government of East Timor', Lopes da Cruz.[2] He was reported to have stated that more than 60 000 people -- most of them women and children -- had been killed since August 1975. He also admitted that there had been reprisals against Fretilin supporters, often as revenge for Fretilin cruelties while in de facto power.

These allegations caused widespread consternation and stunned James Dunn, especially as his assessment had put the number of deaths during the civil war at less than 2 000.[3] However, by early

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1 Dunn, J.S., "The Political Situation in East Timor", p.18.

2 One of the earliest reports took the form of some letters, published by the Northern Territory News, on 29 January 1976, from two elderly Dili residents, to relatives in Darwin. One letter stated '...more people were killed and more devastation caused in Dili itself than was done by the Japanese in the Second World War'. It added that many families had been slaughtered and others were missing.

3 Harris, S., personal interview with Dunn, Canberra, November 1981.

1976 while he believed these events had to be viewed in their full horrifying perspective,[1] he was critical of the figures put forward by da Cruz. Although Dunn admitted that the fighting produced excesses from both sides, he was critical of the Indonesians, accusing them of indiscriminate killing. Rather than actions that could be dismissed as merely an unfortunate result of 'excesses' by unruly elements of the Indonesian forces,[2] they were to be condemned for what they were -- the 'worst atrocity in the recent history of Southeast Asia...'.[3] Dunn was angered and extremely bitter and could not understand, let alone accept, Indonesia's objective of bringing about the integration of East Timor through military means; nor could he accept the call by so-called pragmatists in Australia, that Australia accede to such an objective. By early 1977, as we noted earlier, both he and Labor MP, G. Bryant, had produced reports confirming Indonesian atrocities in East Timor.[4]

The Dunn Report, as it became known,[5] created a furor in Australia, embroiling politicians and giving rise to representations to President Carter and human rights activist, Congressman D. Fraser, who, scheduling a hearing on East Timor before his Congressional sub-committee, asked Dunn to testify. Indonesia's embittered reaction and calls within Australia for Dunn's removal from the parliamentary library only served to sharpen the ensuing debate.[6] While Dunn's findings prompted two additional hearings before the Fraser sub-committee during the

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1 The Age, 20 March 1976.

2 The Brawidjaja Division was ordered back to Indonesia following such 'excesses' (the Sydney Morning Herald, 14 February 1976).

3 Harris, S., personal interview with Dunn, Canberra, November 1981.

4 Dunn was asked by aid and church organization in January 1977 to interview newly arrived East Timorese refugees in Portugal. He had discussions with individuals as well as groups and he documented accounts of mass executions, torture, looting and rape.

5 See Chapters Seven and Nine.

6 See Chapters Eight and Nine.

middle of 1977, as well as a Congressional fact-finding mission to East Timor, the eventual outcome of this approach to the Congress was not a success for those who had supported it. Nevertheless, the Australian Government's policy of merely looking the other way was beginning to be placed into a different perspective, largely because of Dunn's actions in developing an awareness in Australia, of Indonesia's brutal actions.

6. The Academic Community

When examining the extent and nature of Australian academic interest in Indonesian issues during this period, one is struck by the paucity of contributions specifically on the East Timor issue.[1] Of the handful of Australian contributions to the debate, however, those who featured were J.A.C. Mackie,[2] N. Viviani,[3] P. Eldridge,[4] and H. Arndt.[5]

Two important writings to appear in 1976 came from Mackie[6] and

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1 Although referring to Indonesianists, this point was made rather firmly by Viviani in "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.25, f.103.

2 Mackie, J.A.C., "Australian-Indonesian relations", Current Affairs Bulletin, Vol.53, No.5, October, 1976; "Australia and Southeast Asia" in Coral Bell (ed.), Agenda for the Eighties, ANU Press, Canberra, 1980. See also "Australia's Foreign Policy, From Whitlam to Fraser", Dyason House Papers, Vol.3, No.1, August 1976.

3 See Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue" (1976) and "Australians and the Timor Issue: II" (1978).

4 Eldridge, P.J., "Recent Trends and Issues in Australia-Indonesia relations", Politics, XIII (1), 1 May 1978; his two monographs: Aid, Basic needs and the Politics of Aid in Indonesia, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, Melbourne, 1980; and Indonesia and Australia: the politics of aid and development since 1966 (1979). See also his "Aid in the end is a political process" (1979).

5 See Arndt, H.W., "Timor: expediency or principle?", Quadrant, May 1976; and "Timor: Vendetta against Indonesia", Quadrant, December 1979.

6 See Mackie, J.A.C., "Australian-Indonesian relations". Mackie was then Research Director at the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies at Monash University.

Viviani[1] respectively and together they provided detailed and balanced elaborations on some of the major political and security considerations underlying the East Timor issue. Mackie was particularly concerned with Australia's ambivalent attitudes towards Indonesia historically. On one level Australia had always displayed a concern to establish good relations with its nearest Asian neighbour; yet, at another level, there existed in Australia the tendency to view Indonesia with suspicion and apprehension whether in racist, ideological or security terms. While it is against such a background that Mackie proposes four major principles (which he argued should form the basis of the direction and substance of Australia's relationship with Indonesia[2]), he focuses attention principally on the controversial East Timor issue. For Mackie, the degree of controversy and anti-Indonesian sentiment generated by the issue had less to do with the intrinsic importance of the issues than with the range of emotions involved, including the:

> idealistic advocacy of the principle of self-determination for the Timorese [,] ...ideological antagonism towards the Suharto regime and spluttering Australian nationalism. There has been, too, a good deal of traditional ignorance and anxiety about what the Indonesians are up to.[3]

He discounted Indonesia's reasons for its concerns over East

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1 See Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue". At the time, Dr. Viviani was a Research Fellow at the Australia-Japan Project, Australian National University.

2 First, Australians cannot afford to antagonize Indonesia on sheer realpolitik grounds. Second, both Australia and Indonesia would need to work at the relationship and not leave it 'to chance and the fluctuating pressures of politics, either international or domestic'. Third, Australia should not become too closely identified with one particular faction or party within the Indonesian Government. Finally, Australia should move away from the practice of thinking about the relationship in purely bilateral terms (Mackie, J.A.C., "Australian-Indonesian relations", pp.17-18). See also his "Australia's relations with Indonesia: principles and policies" (1974). Mackie continued to advocate these principles five years later in his "Australia and South-east Asia", pp.137-141.

3 Mackie, J.A.C., "Australian-Indonesian relations", p.9.

Timor,[1] motivated more by domestic considerations, including Suharto's perception that having 'let East Timor slip out of Indonesia's grasp, his political opponents would be eagerly spreading stories that such a thing would never have happened in Sukarno's time'.[2]

In any event, Mackie sensibly puts the arguments against any Australian involvement in the issue. First, Australia's national interests demanded that it not be drawn in if it risked antagonizing Indonesia. Second, an economically dependent mini-state would be 'troublesome' to Australia and Indonesia. Third, if Indonesia chose to incorporate East Timor, then Australia would not be in any position to stop it. While Mackie acknowledged the moral aspects of the arguments put by those opposing Indonesia's East Timor policies, he saw 'a blatant discrepancy between our moralistic rhetoric (both official and unofficial) and our inability or reluctance to do anything substantial in support of it'. He singled out the press and politicians who, when Australia had 'to make invidious choices between odious realpolitik and noble principles [, wanted]... to have it both ways'.[3] Mackie was also critical of both the Whitlam and, more particularly, Fraser governments, and argued that there was no room for ambiguity in Australia's Indonesia policies.[4]

Like Mackie, Viviani also levelled criticism at both governments. Whitlam's initial judgement in September 1974 that East Timor's integration into Indonesia was preferable to its independence, 'foreclosed Australia's options in the dispute and deprived it of flexibility ...'.[5] Moreover, Fraser's drawnout policy of conciliation of Indonesia served only to provoke

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1 An independent East Timor could open up the way for communist subversion in the archipelago; and fear of secessionism in the archipelago.

2 Mackie, J.A.C., "Australian-Indonesian relations", p.19.

3 Mackie, J.A.C., "Australian-Indonesian Relations", p.21.

4 The difference between Whitlam and Fraser was that Whitlam 'did not talk one way while acting in quite another'. Mackie, J.A.C., "Australia's Foreign Policy, from Whitlam to Fraser", p.5.

5 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", pp.222 and 224.

Australian public opinion, while alienating the Suharto government.[1] Viviani's sober account of the direct conflict between government policy and public opinion over the Timor issue reflected many of the complexities highlighted by Mackie. In particular it revealed that:

> foreign policy issues involving Indonesia attract strong Australian public attention and involvement, even if the issue is not directly related to Australian security interests. This is so partly because of her proximity, and partly because of the volatile mixture of a strong sense of idealism in foreign policy ... with a latent antagonism towards Indonesia.[2]

Further, Viviani was of the view that the East Timor issue revealed how 'temporary and fragile' the growth of public approval of the Indonesian Government had been, since the 1960s.[3]

It is interesting to note that while Mackie considered that there had been very little informed public discussion about the underlying principles which should guide Australia's Indonesia policies, Viviani was focusing attention on the increasing governance of the relationship by a doctrine of 'asymmetry' under the careful but deliberate tutelage of an elite of pro-Indonesian lobbyists within the Department of Foreign Affairs.[4] In effect, Viviani argued that such a doctrine dictated that Australia's need for good relations with Indonesia would override the merits of any dispute.[5]

Eldridge addressed this issue in a major paper he published in Politics in 1978.[6] While the need for friendly relations with Indonesia had for many years been asserted as necessary to Australian foreign policy, essentially on geo-political grounds, Eldridge uniquely argued that the domestic political implications for Australia had yet to be spelled out. In this context, the doctrine of 'asymmetry' was not only 'based on assumptions about

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1 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue: II", p.255.

2 Ibid., p.259.

3 Ibid.

4 Refer to Chapter Seven, p.322.

5 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", pp.200-201.

6 Eldridge, P.J., "Recent Trends and Issues", p.44, ff.

the stability of the Suharto government which are slowly being undermined by changes within Indonesia', but it was also ensuring that greater pressure was on Australia to be politically adaptable.[1]

This argument can be identified in the writings of Mackie and Viviani, although neither considered that political upheavals or social breakdown were as imminent as Eldridge stated, and other critics of the regime, often implied. Nonetheless, Mackie's prognosis on the relationship centred on the need for Australian policy makers to:

> preserve a steady course, neither too distant nor excessively friendly, in relation to any Indonesian government, regardless of its political or ideological colouring or our own liking or disliking of the policies it pursues.[2]

In view of comments he had made some 15 years earlier,[3] it is ironic that Mackie, like Brown,[4] should still be arguing that Australia needed, through a network of mutual interests and institutional ties, to build up a less fragile relationship with Indonesia -- one that would absorb the traumas generated by issues such as East Timor or Irian Jaya.[5] For Mackie, strains on the relationship derived essentially from the domestic arena where, as Viviani correctly points out, anti-Indonesian Government sentiment increasingly dominated the East Timor debate.[6]

It was with this particular aspect of the Timor issue that Arndt took particular exception. While a significant contributor to the debate on Indonesian issues in the earlier period, Arndt had throughout this period been conspicuously quiet. A strong defender of Indonesia immediately following the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, Arndt played little part in the debate until 1979, at which

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1 Ibid., p.49.

2 Mackie, J.A.C., "Australia and South-east Asia", p.140.

3 See p.17 of thesis.

4 Brown, C.P., "Australia-Indonesia Relations", in N. Viviani (ed.), Australia and Asia: The Capricorn Papers pp.79-80.

5 A reference to the Irian Jaya-Papua New Guinea situation and the OPM rebel problem on the border.

6 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.225.

time he considered it necessary to address some of the major issues in what he considered was a 'no-holds-barred propaganda war against Indonesia' in Australia.[1]

Arndt had in 1975 warned against the damage being done to the Australia/Indonesia relationship by 'an alliance of left-wing ideologists with a small band of misguided idealists'.[2] In what could only be considered a lone stand by the Canberra academic, Arndt set out to critically examine and challenge the arguments that had underwritten much of what he considered was anti-Indonesian sentiment during the previous five years. In a carefully documented piece in Quadrant, and one which contained many of the criticisms put forward some years earlier by Santamaria, and to a lesser degree, ideologically at least, by Hastings,[3] Arndt focused attention on the roles played by groups such as the CIET and ACFOA, as well as individuals like James Dunn, Ken Fry and Tom Uren. He ridiculed allegations that the East Timor people had been victims of an Indonesian policy of 'genocide', and levelled particularly strong criticism at the Australian press,

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1 Arndt, H.W., "Timor: Vendetta against Indonesia", p.13.

2 The Canberra Times, 19 February 1975. See also Arndt's piece in the Bulletin, 18 December 1979, p.77. See also his "Timor: expediency or principle?"

3 Hastings described Whitlam's East Timor policy as a 'debacle', and considered that it represented a failure by the Australian Government to anticipate 'the tremendous pressures induced on Indonesia to seek a military solution' once Portugal had shown it would abdicate all responsibility for the territory (the Sydney Morning Herald, 13 April 1977). Hastings shared with Denis Warner (the Sunday Times, 4 April 1976) the view that a period of decolonization was required if East Timor were to be a viable State, otherwise it would not only 'serve as a beacon light to flickering secessionist movements in eastern Indonesia' but also 'as a launching pad for subversive activities against the republic' (Ibid.). Hastings was extremely critical of anti-Indonesian 'broadsides' being conducted in Australia and, while not placing them on the same moral and intellectual level, was particularly scathing in his remarks about the likes of Dunn and fellow humanitarian and politician, Michael Hodgman. Indeed, Hastings spent a good deal of time rebutting Dunn's allegations over Indonesia's atrocities. Hastings, like Santamaria, considered himself a pragmatist and as far as he was concerned, a good deal of the anti-Indonesian sentiment, whether it be from the right (Hodgman) or left (Uren), was ideological. See, for example, the Sydney Morning Herald, 1 February 1978.

which he felt had been so effective in promoting the anti-Indonesian campaign being waged by the CIET that 'the general public in Australia has heard little if anything of the other side'.[1]

While he acknowledged that sympathy in Australia for the East Timorese claim to independence was well-meaning, he believed that such a step would have been unrealistic, for many of the reasons put forward by the Whitlam government. In the final analysis, while he was convinced that Indonesia had a good case for absorbing East Timor when it did, Arndt considered that Suharto should have earlier negotiated with Portugal for a transfer of the territory or, failing that, moved in before the Fretilin coup. Nevertheless, Arndt believed Indonesia:

> faced by the threat to its national security interests which it saw in that coup, and in the consequent risk of a communist satellite state being established on the island ... did no more than any other power (including Australia?) would have done in similar circumstances.[2]

Arndt also paid a good deal of attention to the motives and attitudes behind the anti-Indonesian campaign which gained momentum in Australia in the mid-to-late 1970s. He put it down to the wider campaign being waged by Communists in Australia to:

> consistently attack...anyone who stood in the way of communist expansion in Asia... To them, the East Timor tragedy has been another welcome stick with which to belabour the hated 'fascist' Suharto regime and to influence wider sections of public opinion against it.

But as Arndt correctly argued (as did Viviani), public opinion was susceptible to anti-Indonesian sentiment which, combined with latent racism, showed 'that many Australians need not be greatly provoked to reveal an ingrained distaste for and sense of superiority over their Indonesian neighbours and are only too ready to believe the worst of them'.[3]

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1 Arndt, H.W., "Timor: Vendetta Against Indonesia", p.14. This point had been raised by Viviani who argued that: 'The activist anti-integrationists captured the media's attention thus creating the probably correct impression that they represented the major thrust of interested opinion'. (See Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.225).

2 Ibid., p.16.

3 Arndt, H.W., "Timor: Vendetta Against Indonesia", p.17.

This brief survey of academic interest in the East Timor issue indicates that there continued to be an enduring concern to document some of the major arguments arising from the state of the Australia/Indonesian relationship, as well as to record the processes and pressures at work in the conduct of Australia's policies during the East Timor crisis. However, the most sustained and critical attention occurred after the key events had happened, and after any chance which Australia may have had to influence the course of events had passed.

An important figure in assembling and making available her account of what transpired both within and outside the parliamentary arena was Dr. Viviani. Viviani had been on the personal staff of the Foreign Minister, Senator Willesee, and she provided some provocative insights into the forces at work in the formulation and conduct of Australia's East Timor policies during the Whitlam government. Generally, however, this handful of academics played a relatively modest part in the debate on East Timor in foreign policy terms. They provided an additional forum for debate on the issue but did not go beyond that role and its limited influence.

Conclusion

Three aspects of community opinion, and the opinion of this collection of groups and individuals, had particular significance. First, while the broader East Timor question generated a widespread uneasiness in the Australian community, Indonesia's actions in the territory raised deep-seated Australian sensitivities about Indonesia. These views were from across the political spectrum and, generally, put the cost of incurring Indonesian resentment much lower than did the Australian Government. Representative of such views were those held by James Dunn and the trade unions.

On the other hand, there were those who argued that Australia's interests were best supported by a policy of sympathy and support for the Suharto Government. They included those who had established close links with the Indonesian Government, including figures such as Santamaria and Arndt, as well as the AIBCC. Generally speaking, they contend that Indonesia was compelled to intervene in East Timor for primarily strategic reasons -- arising from Portuguese disinterest in its former colony, Timorese irresponsibility and left-wing provocation in and

outside East Timor -- and that dissenting opinion within Australia was insensitive to Indonesia's strategic outlook, and to Indonesian values and, to a lesser degree, cultural perspectives which inform such Indonesian actions.[1]

Second, while the solidarity groups performed an important function as a nucleus for the many groups and individuals that emerged in support of East Timorese self-determination, the Australia-wide movement failed to realize its full potential as a lobby group.[2] While such a view contrasts strongly with those put by Viviani,[3] Dr Viviani's observations do not provide us with evidence of the existence of a fully developed organized movement. While the former Willesee staff member considered that diversity among the groups in the Australia Timor movement had made their pressure effective, and a temporary alliance was formed between the left and right over the issue, individuals like J.S. Dunn and many of the groups that emerged in the course of the issue, whether from the trade unions or church movements, did so spontaneously and independently of any formal movement. Moreover, as Viviani correctly states, while there was widespread sympathy for the plight of the East Timor people, because of 'their public silence, it is difficult to judge how large a group of Australians was in favour of Timor's integration with Indonesia'.[4]

This is all the more critical when it is remembered that while public opinion polls revealed that a high proportion of Australians took a dim view of Indonesia's actions, there were also a large number of Australians who did not know what to make of the issue. However, as the record showed, it was the experience of the left that unless solidarity groups built at least some links with a broader movement, their voices would become isolated and lost. Conversely, if the formal movement was unable to organize these groups into a solid, enduring structure, then doubts could be raised as to whether the strategy they pursued was the correct

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1 This is developed further in the Conclusions.

2 Jolliffe, J., "Timor: A Year of Struggle", p.7.

3 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.209.

4 Ibid., p.225.

one.[1]

What then are the reasons for the contradictions between the observations of Viviani and Jolliffe? Dr Viviani's more Canberra-oriented view was mainly concerned with the effect of the Timor movement on the Parliament, government departments and embassies. It was Jolliffe's view that the movement in Australia consisted only of those individuals and groups who were actual members of the solidarity groups. In this regard, criticism could be levelled at the trade union movement whose activities, Jolliffe believed, were minimal indeed.[2] Yet, if only a few rank and file members of the unions were active in the solidarity groups, it raises the question of what should have been done about linking the solidarity groups to mass organizations of the Labor Movement and other community organizations. While it attempted to do this, the Timor movement did not confront this issue with any outstanding success.

Third, the government also came under pressure from those individuals and groups who favoured Indonesia's actions in East Timor. The AIBCC and B.A. Santamaria were representative of such opinion, believing that Australia could not afford to antagonize Indonesia and that it should be prepared to pay considerable costs to maintain Indonesia's economic and, in particular, political goodwill. In this regard, there was a strong measure of congruence between this opinion and both the Whitlam and Fraser governments. Where this group dissented from government policy was in its criticism, on pragmatic grounds, of the damage being inflicted on the wider diplomatic relationship with Indonesia by Australia's stance on the East Timor issue, particularly under the Fraser administration.

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[1] See, for example Footnote 3, p.472, which details the discussion about the strategies to be employed to mobilize support for the self-determination issue.

[2] Jolliffe, J., "A Year of Struggle", p.7.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has examined Australia's Indonesia policies during the period 1965 to 1980. It has described the influences that have shaped these policies and in doing so brought into play the broad constellation of political forces that, in one way or another, are involved in the making of foreign policy.[1] So far, the chapter conclusions have summarized the broad features of what is a complex story. It remains, therefore, before reconsidering the questions raised in the Introduction and reassessing their implications for the formulation of future Australian policy towards Indonesia, only to elaborate on some general points of significance that have emerged. The first relates to the methodology employed.

As a study of foreign policy, this thesis has sought to explain the decisions of successive Australian Governments in their relations with Indonesia. However, an analysis of Australia's Indonesia policies required a framework that would facilitate the organization of the information gathered in such a way as to illuminate the relationship among some of the key variables, while accommodating the fact that international politics increasingly reflects a complex interaction of global, regional and State components. Thus, the method used here has been an adaption of J.D. Singer's level-of-analysis framework -- an important conceptual and methodological research tool in the study of international relations. As such it represents an interpretative approach and one based on two assumptions: first, an understanding of international relations suffers when only one level-of-analysis is utilized; and second, the levels of analysis are interdependent, with each level yielding, as this study has shown, a different perspective on the factors influencing Australia's foreign policy behaviour towards Indonesia. Thus, it has been possible to identify a series of approaches to the development of the Australia/Indonesia relationship.

This relationship has always been a complex one. In the 1950s

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[1] One of the earliest influences on the writer was T.B. Millar's "On Writing About Foreign Policy", Australian Outlook, Vol.21, 1967, pp.71-84.

and 1960s, Indonesia's aggressive nationalism and strengthening alignment with communism challenged Australian strategic thinking and it tested yet to mature Australian diplomacy. During confrontation, more than during Indonesia's West Irian campaign, Australia's tempered military response was, as Beddie suggested,[1] based more on an awareness of a balanced power relationship than a concern that there be no diplomatic rupture, such was the characteristically peculiar nature of relations between the two countries. Nevertheless, even though existing links were sustained, Australian policy makers remained cautious.

This caution prevailed through the events of late 1965 and well into 1966, when a distinct change in the Indonesian Government's ideological and nationalistic outlooks created the conditions for an improvement in what was by the mid-1960s a particularly fragile bilateral relationship. The Australian Government, however, remained cautious -- there was always the thought that a sharp reversal of policies may be accompanied by much less change in underlying attitudes than many might expect -- and adopted a low-key response to these changed but far-reaching circumstances.

The merit in such a strategy came under intense scrutiny from the Australian press and political arenas. As presented in Chapter Four, press discussions tended to sensationalize developments in Indonesia, with few contributing to any meaningful policy exchange. With the emergence and consolidation of the Suharto government, this gave way to sensible appraisals of the major issues arising from Indonesia's continuing internal disorders. Of particular concern to the Australian press was Indonesia's desperate need for economic rehabilitation and it became increasingly critical of the government's apparent tardiness in assisting the New Order government. Similar concerns were also expressed in the Australian Parliament, where an early bipartisan interest in Indonesia's future was soon overshadowed by the Parliament's ongoing debate on Australia's security and, in the context of the conservative parties' preoccupation with communism, Indonesia was rapidly seen to have a significant new security role in the region. Inevitably, this set the tone and shape of the debate on Indonesian issues until the early 1970s.

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[1] See the introduction to Part One.

In the meantime, changes in Australia's international environment had stimulated a fundamental reassessment of regional security issues, the outcome of which saw a perceptible shift in emphasis to the notion of security based on regional cooperation rather than on great power guarantees. As presented in Chapter Two, Indonesia was emerging as a significant feature of this reassessment and, under pressure from the United States, Australia was now prepared to assist in measures for the stabilization of its northern neighbour -- measures that were to enable Indonesia to take its place in a post-Nixon doctrine Southeast Asian international order.

Throughout this period, Australian Government attitudes and policies towards Indonesia at first attracted little comment from the wider community, other than that which emerged in the context of changes stimulated by the British and American decisions to withdraw from the region. The most interesting aspect of community opinion at this time was the coexistence of an uneasiness about Indonesia's potential as a threat, with a concern for its stability and welfare. This conflict was in evidence also by now in debates being generated in the Parliament and the press over the features and future direction of Indonesia's 'New Order'. By the mid-1970s, with major changes in our international environment nearing completion, well-informed and concerned parliamentarians and journalists were raising a number of contentious issues arising from the increasingly authoritarian nature of the Suharto government. This reflected, rather than generated, wider community debate at the time, where dissenting views had focused on moral and humanitarian issues such as political prisoners, aid and corruption. This discussion had its antecedents in the immediate period leading up to and including the West New Guinea issue, and it raised the notion of the levels of costs which Australia was prepared to accept in the maintenance of what was being argued officially and firmly as an increasingly important strategic relationship.

International pressures at play on Australian foreign policy were now significant and they had emerged as major factors in the conduct of Australia's West New Guinea policy and Australia's attitude toward Indonesia's 'Act of Free Choice' -- the successful outcome of which was perceived by western strategists to be of major importance to Indonesia, which was now at a crucial stage of

development. The issue illuminated the conflict between principle and national interest, and the Australian Government's pragmatic approach to it outraged a large cross-section of public opinion which was at odds not only with the questionable morality of the government's policy of 'non-interference', but also with the pusillanimous way it expressed its support for Indonesia, over and above the interests of the people of West New Guinea.

As discerned in Chapter Six, articulate opinion throughout this period was distinguished by a great variety in the nature of the groups and individuals involved, in the kinds of opinions expressed (see later) and the ways in which these were set forth. The general effect was to enrich and complicate the policy dialogue, but the perceptible influence on policy was non-existent. Nevertheless, a high degree of congruence existed between the government and those elements of articulate opinion such as the AIBCC and H.W. Arndt, who successfully cultivated direct contact with the conservative parties. Unlike those individuals and groups such as Eldridge and the non-government lobby groups who adopted an increasingly dissenting position on Indonesian issues and Australia's now entrenched relationship with Indonesia, this group of opinion -- aided by the Australian press -- created a climate of opinion in which the government was encouraged to sustain its Indonesian policies.

These policies were underwritten by an approach that stressed pragmatism, and which claimed that Australia should maintain good relations with Indonesia because of its strategic significance in the Southeast Asian region. On this basis, in 1969, the West New Guinea issue was not allowed to obscure the nature of Australia's interests in the region, necessitating a distinction be drawn between principle and pragmatism. By the mid-1970s, with Portuguese rule in Timor in a state of collapse, Australia was again faced with a dilemma of similar dimensions. Like the West New Guinea issue, the same distinction was drawn between principle and pragmatism. But, again, as with that issue, while the government pursued the pragmatic approach, the <u>conduct</u> of Australia's policy left much to be desired.

Whitlam's concern for the significance of the relationship compelled him to adopt an isolationist posture. While he personally believed in self-determination, Whitlam did little to indicate that such an option was a viable one for the East Timorese

to pursue. Such an approach came under intense scrutiny in the press and the Australian Parliament, and served only to inflame public opinion, the nucleus of which had laid dormant since pursuing, as part of its ongoing wider activities, issues and causes such as West New Guinea, Vietnam and South Africa (Springbok rugby).

While East Timor did not figure prominently in Australia's press coverage of Indonesian issues before events leading to Indonesia's invasion of the territory in December 1975, reports of these events played an important part in influencing Australian perceptions of developments taking place in East Timor. Equally important, these reports provided background knowledge and impressions which helped in clarifying later developments and official interpretations of them. Such first-hand reports emerged as an important source of information on developments taking place in East Timor and often differed in substance to official versions being given in Jakarta and Canberra. However, as sustained and critical as this reporting was, it occurred after the event, thus negating any influence Australia may have had.

A major development for the press in the pre-invasion period was the deaths of the five Australian journalists. While this tragedy generated larger moral questions about Indonesia's role in East Timor, and the Australian Government's willingness to acquiesce to them, it became a recurring theme in (and a major factor in the shaping of) Australian news coverage of the East Timor issue. While this inevitably portrayed Indonesia in a bad light, it indicated less that reporters were ideologically pre-disposed against Indonesia than the fact that such an incident, together with other aspects of Indonesia's behaviour, deeply influenced their perceptions. Similarly, by the time of the invasion, there was a strong anti-Indonesian consensus in the public views of many politicians.

Until then, there had been a measure of consensus in the Parliament regarding Australia's interests in the East Timor issue. However, with the outbreak of civil war, attitudes in the Parliament began to reveal undercurrents of ideological and politico-strategic thinking of where such interests lay, particularly on the part of the Opposition. This tended to overshadow the similarity in positions being adopted by the major political parties and embroiled the Parliament in a totally

undisciplined, ideologically driven debate reminiscent of that generated by the Vietnam issue -- the sentiments of which would not have been lost on observers in Jakarta.

Nevertheless, the Parliament had emerged as an important dimension of opinion on the East Timor issue, which was rapidly bringing together all major dissenting groups and individuals, and attracting a wider range of public opinion than was traditionally concerned with Indonesian issues. With community opinion at this time sensitive to developments taking place in East Timor as well as retaining a strong measure of distrust of Indonesia, the solidarity groups that emerged in 1974-1975 in support of East Timorese self-determination, and then independence, were on fertile grounds. The invasion scare of February 1975 crystallized many of these groups into action, with the CIET throughout that year providing a vehicle for the diverse groups which were emerging over the East Timor issue and drawing support from across the political spectrum. However, while developments in the territory galvanized this alliance -- by December involving parliamentarians and non-government lobby groups, including the ACC, students, aid agencies and trade unions -- and fuelled a build-up of a considerable head of steam, nobody was able to pressure the Whitlam government into changing its position on East Timor.

However, the same could not be said about this activity during the period of the Fraser government, because the basic feature of L-CP policy was its domestic orientation. The ambiguous nature and conduct of the government's policy after Indonesia's invasion of East Timor did little to improve the relationship between Australia and Indonesia, while serving to sustain the core of support for East Timor's right to self-determination generated throughout the previous eighteen months. Although the breadth of support was beginning to shrink and was accompanied by increasing calls from the press, individuals and groups for the Australian Government to recognize Indonesia's takeover of East Timor, this hardcore of support remained firm throughout the 1976-1978 period. While it lacked any credible alternatives to existing policy, it was successful in continuing to be effective in embarrassing the Fraser government, and held it back from formally supporting Indonesian policy.

Australia's recognition was a matter of timing -- something that Indonesia chose not to fully understand. While Jakarta

conveyed the impression that it did not conceive of any real distinction between official opinion and officially tolerated private opinion, there was always a slow movement towards recognition that was inherent in the nature of Fraser's policy. The Fraser government was compelled to tolerate dissident opinion from all levels and quarters but in the long run, this had no effect on the outcome. Fraser was faced with doing as much as he could to keep good faith with Jakarta until he thought it was time that domestic (and international) opinion would accept recognition of the Indonesian position.

The following discussion now reconsiders the questions posed in the Introduction to this thesis. The analysis of Australian attitudes and policies undertaken in this study suggests that geostrategic considerations have dominated official Australian thinking about the substance and aims of Australia's relations with Indonesia, in the same way that they have influenced Australian decisions about Indonesia. Since 1966, many diplomats and political leaders have tended to stress 'Indonesia's ... strength due to her size, population, physical location as a neighbour, control over sea lanes and natural resources -- also her potential as a market and outlet for investment'.[1] Inevitably, such an outlook has compelled Australian governments to pursue two major policy objectives: to maintain Indonesia's stability and goodwill, while promoting a favourable political climate for the development of trade and investment. Fundamental to these objectives has been the major assumption that Australia's long term interests will be best served by a policy that was both supportive and sympathetic to the 'New Order' Government. This, in turn, would afford Australia access to, and influence over, policymakers in Jakarta.

This has had a number of major effects. First, a 'special relationship' has been pursued by successive Australian governments as a means of securing Australia's political and strategic interests in the region. Such a strategy, which inevitably placed emphasis on the notion that Australia's relations with the 'New Order' government 'are (or should be) the most important

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[1] Eldridge, P.J., "Recent trends and issues in Australia-Indonesia relations", p.44.

consideration affecting Australian foreign policy',[1] took on particular meaning in the late 1960s, during a period of turbulent change in the international order. Because of its excessive preoccupation with security as well as with its 'natural' alignments with Britain and America, Australia had given little serious attention to such a proposal. It was only when doubt was cast upon the security of these alignments, during such a crucial period, that the Australian Government was prepared to deepen its relations with Indonesia. This saw an improvement in the Australia/Indonesia relationship during two distinct phases: the first coincided with the change of government in Indonesia and was for the purpose of peaceful coexistence and the second was brought about by the changing strategic situation in the region. When it was assured that the Suharto government was in control, the Australian government was swift in providing firm, even uncritical support, and participated in measures designed to stabilize Indonesia and assist it to fulfil its newly appointed role in the post-Nixon doctrine regional order.

In general, such a strategy was embraced enthusiastically by political leaders and Australian diplomats alike, with the latter emerging to play a dominant role in effecting it.[2] Moreover, Australia increasingly accepted Indonesia's claims to leadership in the Southeast Asian region. But this has created a dilemma for the relationship that has evolved, because in terms of Indonesia's ability to exert influence and power in the region it was not:

> one between equals. This asymmetry in power resides in Indonesia's geopolitical location, its control role in the regional balance of power, and in its potential military and economic power. This means that for Australian diplomats, any check or setback in the bilateral relationship is disproportionately more costly to Australian interests than to Indonesian interests.[3]

In other words, Australia's Indonesia policy is also based on the assumption that Indonesia is more important to Australia than Australia is to Indonesia. In these circumstances, where the burden of ensuring a successful relationship rests with anxious policymakers in Canberra, Indonesia is able with relative ease to

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[1] Mackie, J.A.C., "Australian-Indonesian relations", p.14.

[2] Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.200-201.

[3] Ibid., p.201.

successfully apply pressures on Australia.

This is all the more disturbing and ironic when it is considered that such a doctrine has been the product less of geopolitics than deliberate policy, and of the influence that was brought to bear by a small but powerful pro-Indonesian group within the Department of External Affairs/Foreign Affairs, on both the government and the public, to have it accepted as official Australian policy.[1] And to a large degree such a strategy had, in much of the period up to 1975, been successful.

However, while Australia's Indonesia policies secured such bipartisan support (for reasons that could have also had as much to do with public apathy towards such matters), dissenting opinions within Australia were giving rise to subtle but distinct swings in Australian attitudes towards Indonesia. These attitudes -- and the second major effect of the Australian Government's objectives -- while tending to take up specific issues such as political prisoners, West New Guinea and military aid, have increasingly focused on the authoritarian nature of the Suharto government. Aware of Indonesian sensitivities to such criticism, Australian diplomacy has been directed to a 'fire brigade' role -- dampening down the issues in Jakarta while successfully reassuring Indonesia that such negative public opinion did not reflect official government views. With the emergence of East Timor, Australian diplomacy once again set about dampening the issue -- thenceforth the role of Richard Woolcott.[2]. Where the Whitlam government was not prepared to accept the costs of an outright rupture in the relationship with Indonesia, the Fraser government was, until such costs outweighed the gains from its dissent over Indonesia's actions. When viewed in its totality, the dominant theme of the Timor issue was the importance of power, rather than morality, in international relations, and regional security in particular. And both emerged as dominant aspects in the view and perspectives generated by the debate over Australia's disturbed relationship with Indonesia.

Whether we focus on the views of the politicians, the

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[1] Ibid., p.201 and Eldridge, P.J., "Recent trends and issues in Australia-Indonesia relation", p.44. Refer to Chapter Seven, p.322 (footnote 3), and Chapter Ten, p.498.

[2] See Chapter Seven.

journalists, or of some academics, they all shared a common characteristic -- ambivalence. On one level, Indonesia was seen as a major factor in the regional security equation. This view was reflected more in the opinions of commentators such as B.A. Santamaria and organizations such as RSL, who perceived Indonesia as a barrier against communism, especially since the American military withdrawal from the region and the fall of South Vietnam. Amongst the academics there were those (including Mackie, Arndt and Viviani) also who saw Indonesia as a major factor in the security of the region, but did not see it as being expansionist -- a view held, on another level, not only by those on the left (including elements within the ALP, the trade union movement and organizations like the CIET), but also by elements on the right. This entrenched view of Indonesia portrayed her as a power which annexed West New Guinea, and incorporated East Timor in such a way as to confirm the suspicions of some Australians that sooner or later, Indonesia would seek out Papua New Guinea.[1]

However, while several considerations influenced Indonesia's policy towards East Timor -- an historical fear of sucessionism, the influence of the 'hawks' in Jakarta (and their increasingly negative perception of the domestic political dynamics in East Timor) and, related to this but more importantly, a concern that an independent East Timor on its border might become a regional 'Cuba'[2] -- the historical record does not support the view that policy makers in Indonesia are likely to pursue expansionist policies for their own sake. Nevertheless, the record does show that, motivated by a concern for its own security, Indonesia has taken limited military measures to achieve what it perceived to be important national security objectives.

The delusion that Australia has always been a benevolent and unaggressive power has played a subtle but important role in the underlying belief of some Australians that perhaps Indonesia is the reverse. Yet there are fundamental reasons for such views. First, Australia's geographic and cultural isolation has made it difficult

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1 See, for example, Sharp, A., "Timor: Indonesia sows the wind", Arena, No.41, 1976.

2 These influences are examined by J.A.C. Mackie in more detail in Mackie, J.A.C., "Does Indonesia Have Expansionist Designs on Papua New Guinea?" in R.J. May, (ed.), The Indonesia - Papua New Guinea Border, pp.50-57.

for Australians to come to terms with the political realities of the pluralist societies which make up the sovereign states which have emerged in Southeast Asia.[1] As a result, our relations with Indonesia -- in particular since its independence -- have been built on a mixture of false Australian hopes and assumptions[2] and they have tended to overshadow the fact that important differences in political and cultural values exist between the two countries.[3]

But this emphasis on such differences can be taken too far. Those -- whether Santamaria, Arndt or the AIBCC -- who consider that Australia's national interests are best supported by a policy that is sympathetic and supportive of the Suharto government, also argue that such a policy approach is eroded by critics of that government. Arndt, for example, believed that:

> The CIET through its unrestrained abuse and wild charges, has played on and re-awakened the culture-bound prejudices against Asians in general and Indonesians in particular ... it is, also, only too evident that many Australians need not be greatly provoked to reveal an ingrained distaste for and sense of superiority over their Indonesian neighbours and are only too ready to believe the worst of them.[4]

Furthermore, such criticisms, it is argued, are not only hostile but insensitive to Indonesian cultural and political perspectives, and values. Similarly, while Mackie acknowledges that differences do exist in the political and cultural values of the two States, he contends that each should accept that the judgements of each country has a basis in its own political culture. However, cultural explanations such as these tend to conceal the concrete strategic, political and, to a lesser degree, economic interests which lie at the heart of Indonesian and Australian political

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1 Camilleri, J.A., An Introduction to Australian Foreign Policy, Jacaranda Press, Milton, Queensland, 1979, pp.22-29.

2 The major example here is that Australia played an important part in assisting Indonesia to gain its independence from the Dutch. See George, M., Australia and the Indonesian Revolution.

3 Viviani, N., "Australia-Indonesia Relations - Bilateral Puzzles and Regional Perspectives", Australian Outlook, Vol.36, December 1982, p.30.

4 Arndt, H.W., "Timor: Vendetta Against Indonesia", p.17.

behaviour,[1] and their particular responses to the East Timor question.

Nevertheless, the difficulties which the relationship endured during the 1950s and 1960s gave way to a period of euphoria in the 1970s, by which time Sukarno's aggressive nationalism and pro-communism had been well and truly replaced by Suharto's 'New Order' -- a reliable, friendly, anti-communist neighbour dedicated to regionalism abroad and economic reform at home, and a country with whom we could have a 'special relationship'. Within a few short years, this wave of contentment crashed onto the hard rocks of reality in Indonesian political life -- the Malari Affair, the suppression of Indonesian activists, the Pertamina scandal, corruption and East Timor.[2] While many of these issues aggravated sections of Australian public opinion, the Timor issue united more opinion than at any other time, including during either the West New Guinea or confrontation issues.[3] The Timor issue brought to the surface, from both sides of the political fence, a strong measure of 'latent antagonism towards Indonesia'.[4] Those on the right, including politicians such as Bonner and Hodgman, viewed Indonesia's actions in East Timor not only as a denial of human rights but also in terms of Australia's historical preoccupation with 'threats from Asia'.[5] Those on the left, including Uren and Fry, characterized them not only in terms of a denial of human rights but also of corruption, political prisoners and fascist generals.

But, many political issues are, in essence, a struggle between order and justice. In general, the events of the dispute illustrated that Australia's political traditions compelled many to view the East Timorese claims for self-determination as a simple matter of justice and Indonesia's actions as abhorrent. Yet, while

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1 This idea is drawn from Robison, R., "Explaining Indonesia's Response to the Jenkins' Article: Implications for Australian-Indonesian Relations", Australian Outlook, Vol.40, No.3, December 1986, p.136.

2 Peter Hastings, the Age, 30 January 1981.

3 Viviani, N., "Australians and the Timor Issue", p.225.

4 Viviani, N., "Australia and the Timor Issues: II", p.259.

5 Arndt, H.W., "Timor: Vendetta against Indonesia", p.17.

many in Australia were quick to moralize and admonish Indonesia, and the press and a good many of Australia's politicians were ever ready to criticize and to render advice, few were capable of coming to terms with Indonesia's enormous strategic and political dilemma over East Timor.[1] To this extent, all the contrived efforts to be understanding, sensitive and friendly, and to think in terms of some need for a 'special relationship' with Indonesia, have been bankrupt.

Whilst differences exist between Australia and Indonesia in cultural and regional perspectives, because there is no real political and (to a lesser degree) economic substance in the relationship, relations between the two countries will have to endure difficulties, and the emphasis (particularly for Australia's part) will continue to focus on managing the relationship (ie) developing mutual understanding and tolerance. While the force of the asymmetry argument is hard to deny in pure geo-political terms, negative impacts can be mitigated, and Australia's interests would be well served, by 'replacing our obsessiveness and anxiety with a calm, friendly and low profile stance, directing the bulk of our energies towards the development of trade, investment and the provision of educational services for the region.'[2]

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1 Mackie, J.A.C., "Australian-Indonesian relations", pp.20-21.

2 Robison, R., "Explaining Indonesia's Response to the Jenkins' Article: Implications for Australian-Indonesian Relations", p.136. See also Mackie, J.A.C., "Australia and South-East Asia" in Coral Bell, (ed.), Agenda for the Eighties, Canberra, ANU Press, 1980, p.141.

APPENDIX A

Australia's trade with Indonesia

	Imports							Exports		
	Total	From Indonesia				Total		Total	To Indonesia	
	Oil*			Other						
	$Am	$Am	%	$Am	%	$Am	%	$Am	$Am	%
1965-66	2939	56.7	1.9	5.1	0.2	61.8	2.1	2721	5.4	0.2
1966-67	3045	53.5	1.8	3.1	0.1	56.6	1.9	3024	6.9	0.2
1967-68	3264	52.4	1.6	3.0	0.1	55.4	1.5	3045	13.9	0.5
1968-69	3469	55.7	1.6	4.3	0.1	60.0	1.7	3374	20.7	0.6
1969-70	3881	43.7	1.1	5.2	0.1	48.9	1.3	4137	35.3	0.9
1970-71	4150	15.6	0.4	6.9	0.2	22.5	0.5	4376	39.1	0.9
1971-72	4008	4.4	0.1	9.9	0.2	14.3	0.4	4893	57.2	1.2
1972-73	4121	1.4	..	12.2	0.3	13.6	0.3	6214	74.6	1.2
1973-74	8080	-	-	18.8	0.2	18.8	0.2	8726	175.3	2.0
1975-76	8241	3.1	..	21.4	0.3	24.5	0.3	9640	161.3	1.7
1976-77	10411	4.4	..	45.8	0.4	50.2	0.5	11652	180.5	1.5
1977-78	11167	29.1	0.3	55.0	0.5	84.1	0.8	12270	196.3	1.6
1978-79	13757	49.3	0.3	49.9	0.4	99.2	0.7	14233	217.4	1.5

* Includes petroleum products, none for 1975-1976, 1977-1978, $A4.5 milion in 1978-1979.

Source: Arndt, H.W., 'Economic Relations Between Australia and Indonesia', in J.A.C. Mackie (ed.), Indonesia: The Making of a Nation, ANU Press, Canberra, 1980, p.744.

APPENDIX B

Australia-Indonesia Trade: share in each country's total trade

Indonesia	1974		1975		Australia	1973-74		1978-79	
	$USm	%	$USm	%		$Am	%	$Am	%
Exports					**Imports**				
Total	7426.3	100.0	11643.2	100.0	Total	6085.0	100.0	13757.0	100.0
To Australia	22.8	0.3	106.9	0.9	From Indonesia	16.6	0.3	99.2	0.7
of which: oil	4.9	0.1	71.5	0.6	of which: oil	0.6	..	49.3	0.3
other	17.9	0.2	35.4	0.3	other	16.0	0.3	49.9	0.4
Imports					**Exports**				
Total	3841.9	100.0	6690.4	100.0	Total	6914.4	100.0	14233.0	100.0
From Australia	129.7	3.3	218.0	3.3	to Australia	106.5	1.5	217.4	1.5

Source: Arndt, H.W., 'Economic Relations Between Australia and Indonesia', in J.A.C. Mackie (ed), Indonesia: The Making of a Nation, p.743.

APPENDIX C

Australian Economic and Military Assistance:

Regional/Indonesia (Tables 1-4) *

TABLE 1
AID DISBURSEMENTS: 1974/75-1981/82 TO INDONESIA ($Am)

	1974/75	1975/76	1976/77	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82
Projects and technical assistance	12.4	18.1	16.4	20.3	27.5	28.0	32.1	38.0
Training	1.3	1.3	1.7	2.1	1.7	2.2	2.45	2.9
Food	9.2	5.2	4.4	5.9	6.3	8.25	4.5	1.7
TOTAL	22.9	24.6	22.5	28.3	35.5	38.4	39.1	42.6

* Source: Harris, S.V., "Aid to Indonesia", World Review, Vol.22, No.1, April 1983.

TABLE 2
REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF AUSTRALIAN ECONOMIC AID ($'000)

	1946/65	1965/66-1971/72	1972/73-1975/76	1976/77	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82
Indonesia	13.4	68.5	92.1	22.5	28.3	35.5	38.40	39.10	42.70
Other ASEAN states	25.9	47.7	48.6	16.8	23.0	16.12	17.0	19.6	31.95
PNG	127.97	723.371	701.201	226.4	219.4	237.2	235.6	245.1	252.9

Source: *Statistical Summary*, Australian Official Developing Assistance to Developing Countries (1981-1982).
Statistical Section, Australian Development Assistance Bureau.
Functional Classification of Australian Official Development Assistance to Developing Countries (1975/76 to 1980/81).
Statistical Section, ADAB.

TABLE 3
DCP ASSISTANCE TO REGIONAL COUNTRIES ($Am)

	1963/64-1971/72	1972/73-1974/75	1975/76-1977/78	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82	(est) 1982/83
PNG	-	7.784[d]	44.698	11.511	14.178	15.240	16.654	17.543
Indonesia[b]	-	14.436	20.064	7.183	9.589	11.935	8.627	10.159
Singapore[a]	6.852	3.337	1.973	.394	.699	1.175	1.236	1.196
Malaysia	39.596	13.440	11.980	3.963	9.589	3.909	3.954	4.400
Thailand[c]	-	.062	.083	.053	.107	.650	1.206	1.906
Philippines	-	.084	.199	.090	.804	1.161	1.917	1.343
Others (Asia/Africa)	-	.089	.067	.0.48	.087	.247	.114	.300
TOTAL	46.448	39.232	79.064	23.242	35.053	34.317	33.708	36.847

a Included in 'DCP' with Malaysia until 1966/67.
b Limited expenditure on Indonesia included in votes on Defence and Service Departments, 1968-1972.
c Assistance to Thailand and Philippines charged to SEATO Aid under Department of Foreign Affairs Funds prior to 1972/73.
d Commenced 1974/75; also transfer of Australian defence assets ($74.0m).

Source: DCP Assistance to ASEAN Countries, (Annex B), Department of Defence, Canberra, 1983.

TABLE 4
RECENT DCP EXPENDITURE - INDONESIA ($m)

	1978/79	1978/80	1980/81	1981/82
Nomad Projects I and II	1.613	.715	.155	.090
Nomad Project III	-	1.300	6.101	3.387
16 Metre Project	.209	.206	.001	-
Attack Class Project I and II	.074	.023	.091	1.383
Sabre Project	.424	.174	.057	.003
Sioux Helicopter Project	1.613	.141	.081	.276
Survey and Mapping Project	2.408	3.377	1.958	1.900
Field Communications Project	.179	.024	-	-
Research and Development Project	.099	.034	.006	.090
Language Training Project	.150	.142	.058	.155
Nomad Maintenance Project	-	-	.039	.179
C130 Maintenance Project	.001	.774	.357	.055
Landrover Project	-	1.276	2.007	.084
Tanjung Uban Naval Base Equipment	-	-	-	.132
Training in Australia	.220	.769	.681	.634
Miscellaneous	.193	.633	.343	.259
TOTAL	7.183	9.588	11.935	8.627

AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC OPINION POLLS ON QUESTIONS RELATED TO INDONESIA: 1966-80
ISSUE: INDONESIA AS A THREAT

Poll No./ Date	Survey Focus[1]	Total	Responses (%) Some Countries	No Countries	Can't Say	China	Russia	North Vietnam	Japan	Indonesia	Men	Women	ALP	DLP	LCP
194[2] November 1967	Which countries threaten Australia	1928	51.6	32.0	16.4	30.8	13.0	9.4	4.1	7.1	8.1	6.2	6.2	9.4	7.9
203[2] April 1969	Ibid	2092	50.7	36.0	12.9	30.1	16.3	9.0	7.4	7.8	7.7	7.9	5.6	12.7	9.1
209[2] February 1970	Countries likely to threaten Australia in next 10 years[3]	2092	53.6	36.1	10.3	27.1	15.0	6.9	7.8	10.2	11.3	9.1	8.6	15.6	11.5
ANOP[4] July/August 1971	Threat to national security	2121	42.5	44.5[5]	13.0	26.5	13.0[6]	-	12.0	7.0	Not available				
68[2] April 1974	As for 209	1905	57.6	29.4	12.9	20.9	11.5	13.3	6.3	7.2	8.4	6.1	6.2	1.0	8.9
Morgan GP[2] June 1975	Ibid	1905	57.6	29.0	13.0	21.0	12.0	13.0	6.0	7.0	Not available.				
ANOP[7] March 1976	External threat[8]	1500	51.0	38.0	11.0	31.0	28.0	-	-	21.0	Not available.				
Herald Survey May 1980	Countries threatening Australian security	2000	63.0	34.0	3.0	14.0	40.0	7.0[9]	6.0	11.0	15.0	8.0	11.0		12.0 Lib 14.0 NCP

There are four major organisations in Australia that conduct polls: The Roy Morgan Research Centre Pty. Ltd. produces the Morgan Gallup Poll which is published in the Australian weekly news magazine the Bulletin as well as (at federal election times only) in the Australian and the Weekend Australian. The organisation is the Australian Gallup Poll affiliate and has been conducting polls ever since it was formed in 1941 by Roy Morgan. Up to and including the 1969 federal election it was the only organisation that conducted political polls regularly. Until 1973, the poll was known as the Australian Gallup Poll and was published in various newspapers throughout Australia. McNair Anderson Associates Pty. Ltd. does the fieldwork and data processing for Australian Public Opinion Polls (using the Gallup Method). These polls are published widely in Australia and have by far the greatest exposure of any Australian poll. The organisation has been conducting polls since 1973 when it secured the APOP Gallup contract in place of Morgan Research. The organisation is the result of a merger in 1973 between McNair Surveys and the Anderson Analysis, which was formed in 1944 by Bill McNair and George Anderson. ANOP (Australian Nationwide Opinion Polls) produces a poll of the same name. Before 1980, it was published at different times in the National Times and the Australian and reported on the ABC's Four Corners. The organisation began taking polls in 1971. Irving Saulwick and Associates produces the Herald Survey/Age Poll, which is published in the Sydney Morning Herald and the Age. It has been conducting polls since 1971, continuously under the direction of Saulwick but originally under the name of Australian Sales Research Bureau (ASRB). The poll was also conducted with Beacon Research Company Pty. Ltd. and the Department of Political Science at the University of Melbourne.

ISSUE: FOREIGN AID/AID TO INDONESIA

Poll No./ Date		Total		Responses (%)					
					Men	Women	ALP	DLP	LCP
185[2] September 1966	Should aid to Indonesia be increased	5572	Increase	12.6	16.7	8.5	11.5	18.3	13.3
			Maintain	51.8	49.4	54.1	47.0	48.4	56.6
			Reduce	24.1	25.5	22.7	28.5	24.5	20.8
			No Opinion	11.6	8.3	14.6	12.9	8.8	9.4
200[2] October 1968	How much aid should we give to Indonesia	6130	$13m p.a.	21.4	61.3	65.5	67.6	59.1	61.0
			$10m p.a.	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8
			$6m p.a.	36.8	31.0	42.2	36.4	33.0	38.6
			$3m p.a.	1.3	1.0	1.6	1.6	1.3	1.2
			Nothing	22.6	26.7	18.6	27.3	20.3	18.2
			No idea	14.6	10.6	18.5	14.0	15.9	13.9
APOP[11] July 1978	Should Government aid be increased	1993	Increased	26.0	27.0	25.0	Not available		
			Decreased	25.0	29.0	21.0	Not available		
			Maintained	44.0	40.0	49.0	Not available		
			No Opinion	5.0	4.0	5.0	Not available		

		Total	Agree strongly	Agree in part	Disagree strongly	Disagree in part	Don't know
Age Survey[10] April 1972	Aid to needy countries	100	29.0	46.0	10.0	14.0	1.0
	Aid to Australia's needy first	100	74.0	20.0	4.0	1.0	1.0
	Money does not get to needy	100	41.0	34.0	10.0	4.0	11.0
	Send food not money	100	52.0	24.0	11.0	10.0	3.0
	Only to national interest countries	100	26.0	24.0	18.0	29.0	3.0

ISSUE: ATTITUDE TOWARD ASIA/ASIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD AUSTRALIA

Poll No./ Date	Survey Focus	Total	Country	Responses % Too Friendly	About Right	Don't Know	Un-friendly	ALP	LCP
APOP [11] 05/11/74 November 1974	Government attitudes to various countries	2124	South Africa	7.0	36.0	25.0	32.0	23.0	39.0
			Taiwan	15.9	40.0	24.0	21.0	13.0	26.0
			USA	11.0	61.0	8.0	20.0	7.0	30.0
			Russia	21.0	48.0	20.0	11.0	12.0	10.0
			China	34.0	43.0	15.0	8.0	9.0	6.0
			Indonesia	7.0	55.0	25.0	13.0	12.0	13.0

				Ordered
APOP [11] 02/7/76 July 1976	Countries Australia should build up friendship with	1990	USA	42
			China	38
			Japan	36
			Indonesia	34
			Singapore	31
			Malaysia	31
			Russia	27
			None of these [12]	10
			Don't know	3

				Impor-tant	Demo-cratic	Aggres-sive	Trust-worthy	On way up	Likely threat
Age Poll April 1977	Countries important to Australia	2000	Japan	87.0	43.0	11.0	30.0	43.0	20.0
			Indonesia	38.0	6.0	36.0	6.0	15.0	34.0
			China	51.0	6.0	33.0	12.0	35.0	41.0
			India	16.0	8.0	5.0	12.0	8.0	4.0
			Vietnam	11.0	2.0	27.0	4.0	8.0	15.0
			Philippines	19.0	8.0	5.0	14.0	10.0	4.0
			PNG	49.0	34.0	4.0	31.0	31.0	3.0
			Thailand	14.0	4.0	6.0	9.0	6.0	4.0
			None	3.0	30.0	21.0	36.0	13.0	23.0

				Most friendly	Should develop better relations with
APOP (11)	Countries friendly to	1915	Japan	35.0	17.0
May 1979	Australia		Singapore	15.0	
			Malaysia	9.0	
			Hong Kong	8.0	
			Philippines	8.0	
			Indonesia	not available	15.0
			China		38.0

ISSUE: TIMOR

Poll No./ Date	Survey Focus	Total			ALP	Aust. Party	LNCP	DLP	Men	Women
Gallup Poll 87(2) September 1975	Knowledge and thoughts on Timor-Indonesia relations	1694	Read about fighting							
			Yes	86.1					90.7	81.6
			No	13.9					9.3	18.4
			Future of Timor							
			Independent	38.7					43.0	34.4
			Indonesia	17.2					22.6	11.9
			Undecided	44.1					34.4	53.6
			Keeping Peace							
			Send Australian troops	18.9	13.5	14.5	22.5	35.0		
			Keep out	67.8	74.2	73.0	64.8	57.1		
			No opinion	13.3	12.3	12.5	12.7	7.8		
			Indonesian Takeover							
			Favour	23.2	28.9	26.2	26.9	46.0		
			Oppose	45.5	47.6	58.8	44.4	32.3		
			Undecided	31.3	33.5	25.0	28.7	21.6		
Gallup Poll 105(2) February 1976	Favour or oppose Indonesia's takeover of East Timor	1744	Favour	15.3	13.3	17.4	27.6	18.8		
			Oppose	49.5	48.6	56.5	51.1	36.5		
			Undecided	35.2	38.0	26.1	31.3	44.8		

ISSUE: COMMUNIST TAKEOVER IN SELECTED SE ASIAN COUNTRIES

Poll No./ Date	Survey Focus	Total	Similar attempts thought likely in	Responses (%)				
					ALP	L-NCP	Men	Women
APOP (11)	Would the Communist takeover	2003	Thailand	59.0	49.0	68.0	61.0	57.0
05/5/75	of Cambodia and South		South Korea	49.0	40.0	56.0	52.0	45.0
May 1975	Vietnam lead to attempts		Malaysia	46.0	37.0	55.0	48.0	39.0
	on other S.E. Asian		Taiwan	41.0	32.0	48.0	39.0	43.0
	countries		Indonesia	40.0	30.0	48.0	39.0	41.0
			Australia	29.0	18.0	37.0	25.0	32.0

ISSUE: LANGUAGE

Poll No./ Date	Survey focus	Total	Language	Response %
Gallup Poll 06/4/77 April 1977	What language, other than English should be taught in Australian schools	1978	French Italian Japanese Indonesian German	24 24 22 20 19

1. Due to the length of questions and limited space herein, we will only refer to the broad subject matter.
2. Gallup poll (Ray Morgan).
3. This poll called for a "yes" or "no" response to the question of the likelihood of Australia being "menaced by any other country".
4. Australian Nationwide Opinion Polls.
5. The biggest threat was seen to be from rebellion in Communist countries (41%).
6. The Russian Navy.
7. Australian National Opinion Polls.
8. A survey commissioned by the Japanese Embassy in Australia.
9. Now Vietnam.
10. Australian Sales Research Bureau Pty Ltd.
11. Australian Public Opinion Polls (the Gallup Method).
12. The list also included Philippines, India, Taiwan.

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Sir Nigel Bowen, Attorney-General (1966-1969) and Minister for Foreign Affairs (1971-1972) in the McMahon government. Sydney, April 1985.

F.R. Dalrymple, Minister, Australian Embassy, Jakarta (1969-1972) and Australia's Ambassador to Indonesia (1981-1985). Canberra, November 1980.

J.S. Dunn, Australian Consul in Timor (1962-1964), and an officer with the Department of External Affairs in France (1965-1966) and Moscow (1967-1969). At the time of interview, he was Director, Foreign Affairs Group of the Legislative Research Service, Australian Parliament. Canberra, November 1981 (J.S. Dunn and the writer met on an informal basis on countless other occasions).

K.L. Fry, ALP Member for Fraser (ACT), Member of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, 1974-1977 and 1980. Member of Labor Party Delegation to East Timor, March 1975. Canberra, November 1981.

R.W. Furlonger, was the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia 1972-1974, and the Director of the Joint Intelligence Organization in the Department of Defence between 1969 and 1972. He was the Director-General of the Office of National Assessments at the time of the interview. Canberra, January 1981.

Sir John Gorton, Minister for Navy (1958-1963), and Minister assisting Minister for External Affairs (1960-1963). Prime Minister 1968-1971 and Defence Minister in the McMahon government in 1971. Canberra, April 1985.

Major General Sujono Humardani, Personal Assistant to President Suharto, and Honorary Chairman of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. Jakarta, November 1981.

Professor J.A.C. Mackie, former Research Director of the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University. Professor, Social and Political Change, Australian National University. Canberra, January 1984.

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Dr J. Panglaykin, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta. Jakarta, November 1981.

A.P. Renouf, former Secretary to the Department of Foreign Affairs (1974-1977), and Australian Ambassador to the USA, (1977-1979). Sydney, November 1980.

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Professor N. Viviani, former Director of the Centre for the Study of Australian-Asian Relations at Griffith University (1978-1987) and Private Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Willesee (1974-1975). Brisbane, June 1986.

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R.A. Woolcott, Second Secretary, Southeast Asian Section (1957-1959) and Australian Ambassador to Indonesia between 1975 and 1978. Canberra, April 1988.